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Contents

Note from the Editors

The world is in a constant state of flux – so are the languages used to describe it. Such a protean environment, as manifested in literature, often produces diverging attitudes towards life, language and thought. This issue of *Indraprasth* endeavours to capture the multiplicity of viewpoints, and the heterogeneity of such responses. Apart from research papers, it also contains Poonam Datta's commentary on the paradox of English Literature in India and Garima Goyal's review of Anita Nair's *The Better Man*, and sets forth to examine a syncretic symphony of perspectives, ideas, and opinions.

Narinder K. Sharma's "Interpreting Duality of the Self and the Other in Anita Desai's *Where Shall We Go This Summer*?" evaluates the duality-ridden existential conflict of human relationships in the light of the Sartrean framework of being-for-others/the self and the Other and allied conceptual instrumentalities thereof namely the look, intersubjectivity, constitutive otherness etc.

Shweta Tiwari in her paper "Communal Consciousness and Contemporary Indian English Women Poetry: A Select Study of Imtiaz Dharker, Seeme Qasim and Rukmini Bhaya Nair" studies how the poetic praxis of poets like Imtiaz Dharker, Seeme Qasim and Rukmini Bhaya Nair replaces the passive conformity to decrepit models of womanhood and nationalism with an awareness of community-specific and religious violence.

Panchali Mukherjee's "A Deconstructive Reading of Chandrashekhar B. Kambar's 'The Fiend of the Folktales'" illustrates the way in which critical reading of a text disseminates the provisional meaning into an indefinite range of significations that involves an "aporia".

Kalplata's "Claude Chabrol's Madame Bovary: An Inflected Re-writing

or a Textual Infidelity" studies the complexities of transfer of literature into film. There seems to be a fine line between re-writing and textual infidelity, and this paper attempts to comprehend the nuances of such a process with the help of Claude Chabrol's adaptation of Flaubert's novel *Madame Bovary*.

Parvinder in "Wrestling, In and Out: Revisiting *Things Fall Apart*" extends the canvas of Chinua Achebe's magnum opus *Things Fall Apart* beyond the usual investigations into politics, religion, morality and colonialism, and highlights how the sport of wrestling influences the dynamics of things falling apart in the Igbo society.

Shabnam Parveen's "The Documentary as a Tool of Protest: Studying the Documentary *Jahan Chinti Ladi Hathi Se* (1998) as a Case of Protest against Bauxite Mining in Mahuadand, Jharkhand" analyses a film that probes into the details of a village which puts up a brave fight against bauxite mining. It talks about two filmmakers who use documentary as a tool of social protest in Jharkhand.

Suman Sharma in his paper "Trans-creation in Literary Translation of Shanta Kumar's *Lajjo*" examines the role of creation in the literary translation of Shanta Kumar's Hindi novel *Lajjo*. The author compares certain instances from the source and the target text, and examines the trans-creational shifts that occurred in the translation.

Barnali Saha's "Borders and Boundaries: Reading Saadat Hasan Manto's 'Toba Tek Singh', 'The Last Salute' and 'Yazid'" reads Manto as an artist who critiques the politics of the Partition in unequivocal terms. Appropriating the critical framework of Ferdinand de Saussure's Structuralism, it studies Manto's stories as ironic creative outputs that underscore the absurdities of the connection between the signifier and the signified in the discourse of India's Partition.

Jitender Singh's "Role of Intuitive Awareness in Exploring *The Thousand Faces of Night*" engages in an in-depth study of Githa Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night* to reveal a new understanding based on the principle of intuitive awareness.

Ananya Saha in her paper "Negotiating the Impulses of Cyber/Eco-Queer in the Japanese Sci-Fi Anime: The Scope of Technology vis-à-vis Gendered Identity" studies three anime texts for analysis of the interface between two seemingly opposed compulsions; the technophobic eco-feminism and the technophilic cyber-feminism. Through a detailed examination of the context, it examines the agency of technology in the queering of the ontic identity of the cyborg.

Naresh K Vats in his paper "Translating from Page to Screen: A Study of the Adaptations of Milan Kudera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* and Anita Desai's *In Custody*" evaluates *The Unbearable lightness of Being* (1988), directed by Philip Kaufman, screenplay by Jean-Claude Carrière and Philip Kaufman, from the novel by Milan Kundera and National Award winning film *Muhafiz* (1993) as adaptation of Anita Desai's Booker prize nominated novel *In Custody* (1984).

Niharika in "Beyond the 'No Exit': Reconfiguring the Trajectory of (Hegemonic) Gendered Spaces and Strategies of Resistance in Shashi Deshpande's *In the Country of Deceit*" interprets Devayani's crusade through the hegemonic structures/inscriptions before she achieves a psycho-social-existential negotiation.

Avani Bhatnagar's "Naiveté as an Irrational Praxis: A Study of John Nash's *A Beautiful Mind"* problematises the idea of sanity and insanity, and reads naiveté as an irrational praxis which can lead towards becoming of a philosophical being. It reads John Nash's life who

retained the naïve to grow out a "free thinker" to belong to the humanity at large.

The *Indraprasth* is always a result of concerted team effort. Many people have contributed towards is making. Hardeep Kaur and Barnali deserve special mention.

These thought-provoking papers represent a geographical and ideatic cross-section of India and its perspectives, and this volume aims at a thorough critical engagement with the texts, authors, and ideas in question. We sincerely hope that the papers included in *Indraprasth* would help re-engage the readers with life, language and literature afresh.

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The Paradox of English Literature in India

Poonam Datta

Thomas Babington Macaulay's Minute of 1835 spoke of spending 'a lakh of rupees' for the introduction of English literature and teaching of English language to Indians. This historic minute was shaped by a colonial conviction which mainly served the purpose of providing clerks to British administrators. The colonial anxiety to perpetuate the Raj through the English language and literature led to a textual construction of *Bengali Babus*, ridiculing their English accent and their Western education. No serious study of imperial literature can afford to overlook the works of Rudyard Kipling. He avoided overt political exigencies but his text is deeply entrenched with an ironical ideological message about a particular community. In a short story "The Head of the District" Kipling created a Bengali administrator who was brought up on the western education but was unable to govern an unruly region. The story indubitably subverts aspirations of educated Indians for administrating their country.

The emphasis in colonial writings was on the teaching of English language to Indians with active collaborations of administrators, scholars, missionaries, which contributed to the process of the consolidation of the British Empire. Macaulay's famous quote "a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature" succeeded in perpetuating the myth of 'white man's burden' and 'the civilizing mission' of British rule in India.

The colonial mission extended, Gauri Vishwanathan observes "to the spheres of literature, cultural and moral negation of the indigenous history, conventions and traditions"(32). Though literary critics attribute the introduction of the English literary text to numerous factors but Vishwanathan says "the English literary text, functioning as a surrogate Englishman in his highest and most perfect state, becomes a mask for economic exploitation, so successfully camouflaging the material activities of the colonizer." She explains that the traditional Indian literature was considered to be too sensual for Indian students when the curriculum was devised for them.

It is perhaps worth noting that in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it was the English language that offered an opportunity for Indians to translate the indigenous literature into English. English as a language of literary expression had already enticed the Western educated Indians. Sarkar

observes, that "the western educated 'elite' or 'intelligentsia' searched for its models in the European "middle class", which as it learnt through western education, had brought about the great transformation from medieval to modern times…"(67-68). It was mainly from this vantage point, Indians turned to their classical literature and religious texts, but they also wrote in English and read English classics. Babu Kashiprasad Ghosh, Sochee Chander Dutt, Toru Dutt, Bankim Chandra, Aurobindo and Tagore among others wrote both in English and in Bengali.

Nineteenth-Century reform movements, inspired by Western education and thought, invoked Indian cultural traditions and moved towards a synthesis of indigenous cultural narratives and marked a confrontation with Western culture and colonization. The vernacular intellectual movement influenced by Western aesthetics and philosophy formed an alternative narrative of difference, contest and protest. In such circumstances, the publication and dramatization of *Neel Darpan* in 1860 provides a strident antidote to colonial narratives and forms the core of the anti-colonial stance. The play written by Dinabandhu Mitra in 1858-1859 focuses on the exploitative policies of indigo planters.

A literary portrayal of nationalism in diverse forms, languages and approaches, shaped by different ideologies, represented cultural unity in literary works. In Bengal Bankimchandra's *Anandmath* with 'Bande Matram' struck the emotive cord. Newspapers and journals like *Bangbasi*, *Amrita Bazaar Patrika* in Bengal and in Maharashtra Tilak's *Kesari* and *Yuganter* gained immense popularity by invoking patriotic and populist ideals. The colonial state came down heavily on the so-called inflammatory texts and literature, which were proscribed. Many printing presses were shut down in the process. During such tumultuous times, contradictory trends emerged. Munshi Prem Chand, a renowned Urdu and Hindi writer, appreciated "Hugo's *Le Miserable* and novels of Tolstoy and Dickens" as "works of literature having immense literary significance….not lost their charm even today." But Mulk Raj Anand, RK.Narayan, Sarojini Naidu and Raja Rao began to focus on contemporary Indian situations, social reality and Indian scenes in fiction, drama and poetry. Herein lay the origins of Indian writing in English.

The spirit of nationalism was inescapable in Indian writing in English. Kipling, Forster, Edward Thompson, Orwell, Maud Diver, Flora Anne Steel, Travers, and many others engaged with India and Indian themes. In 1920, Forster critiqued Iqbal's 'Asrar-i-Khudi' (*Secret of The Self*, translated by

A.R. Nicolson. The review was first published in December 1920 in the literary magazine *Athanaeum*). His concept of the 'Superman' was inspired by German thinkers. He said: "For Philosophy of the West… Iqbal sure has an eye." Gandhi too had acknowledged the influence of Tolstoy and Ruskin on his thought.

No serious account of the study of Indian English literature can afford to ignore the politics of literature, religion and nationalism in the narrative situated within the imperial tradition of the early twentieth century. In the age of uncertainty, unrest and violence Edmund Candler, a journalist and a novelist, principal of Mohindra College, Patiala wrote a novel *Sri Ram-Revolutionist- A Transcript from Life, 1907-23.*[1] He interrogates the cultural ideals and knowledge embedded in the English text institutionalized by the British in India for Indian students. In the novel, Skene, the Principal of the college, has been teaching English literature to students for over five years. Skene questions the relevance of English literature to Indian students, "the spirit of Adonais was tortured and expired in his presence every day and he was a paid accessory" (11). Skene's frustration in the teaching of English literature is not merely political but cultural as the 'natives', according to him, were unable to appreciate and understand the language and its imagery. He writes about his Indian students:

> The modern books they read must have been incomprehensible even if they could have had enough English to appreciate the subtleties of meaning. They read wantonness into the badinage of Lamb. Thackeray sinned by condoning too much. Shelly and Keats were frank sensualists. Even Stevenson in his canoe shocked them, forever waving his handkerchief at unknown maidens on the bank. Nor could fiction, romantic or realistic, have any point for them, as it offered a criticism of an existence as remote from their own as cobwebs in the moon. The mischief of it was, as critics of education were always pointing out, that the books bore no conceivable relation with the student's life. (44)

The question of racial exclusiveness falls asunder when Skene comes to know that a 'Hindu' has annotated the English classic and the students rely on the notes prepared by the 'native' to understand English literature. "For what culture or ideas would the like of Sri Ram gather from his own

people?" (21). This was not all. Sri Ram, the main protagonist was represented as having spent just a few minutes on "Ode to Nightingale". Candler's novel demonstrates the colonial anxieties and tensions that informed the colonial project of English literature in India. The 'native' was placed in an ambiguous position in this frame. It is in such contexts that Indians were connected with the imperial project of English language and literature.

Independent India nurtured a strong tradition of English literature and language. Various universities and colleges became the leading centers where scholars and students have kept the tradition alive. Research in English literature inevitably connects with European philosophical aesthetics and thought. However, some new trends have reshaped the idea of English literature. Students grapple with various emerging and perplexing theoretical frameworks traversing over the centuries. These frameworks mainly draw on the European tradition, originating with Greek literature together with the Renaissance, as well as reading of the English text in British history and social and political life. In addition, European philosophers and Anglo-European critics too have made interventions in universities' curriculum. Simultaneously, a few American authors were also introduced in the 1960s.

Another trend is the incorporation of African, Spanish, Afro-American, Latin American literature together with voices from the margins and epics into the curriculum after decolonization. In universities, translated works of regional and vernacular writers continue to enrich and expand the scope of higher research. Thus, in contemporary times, for the students of humanities and social sciences, the inclusion of cultural and literary texts in the curriculum and imagination is of critical importance. The regional fiction, drama and poetry have become hallmarks of new literary studies, which tend to reject the cultural hegemony of English language.

From the 1990s, the term 'Indian Writing in English' acquired immense significance. Currently, many research scholars have taken up research work on contemporary Indian writers writing in English. Most of these authors emerged in the1990s and many regional writers are being resurrected but critical readings on their works are not easily available.

The colonial agenda framed a policy which introduced English literature in a systematic and logical manner, yet there were flaws in the

project. The post-colonial impulse to introduce vernacular texts has some limitations too. These texts often restrict themselves to a mechanical appropriation of Western aesthetics and philosophical frameworks at the expense of critical thinking, analysis and rigor. The challenges are many. In many north Indian universities, the number of students pursuing higher research in English literature is dwindling.

Literature has no boundaries and to restrict it to definite categories would be limiting and detrimental to the growth of students of literature and social sciences. An open-ended dialogue between different types of literature and literary theories is required to shape the critical thinking of younger minds. In the end, a conversation across disciplines—literature, philosophy, psychology, criticism, culture and psychology—will make the difference.

(The first draft of the article was published in *The Tribune* on 29 October, 2017)

Endnotes

1 Candler Edmund, *Sri Ram- Revolutionist–A Transcript from Life, 1907-23*, Constable,1912. All the citations to the text are from this edition and the page numbers have been given in the parenthesis immediately following the quotation.

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Interpreting Duality of the Self and the Other in Anita Desai's *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*

Narinder K. Sharma

I

Sartre's phenomenological ontology highlights the idea that consciousness always exists in a social context which is populated and co-inhabited by other consciousnesses. Accordingly, understanding consciousness and its mode of being necessitates an investigation of its relationship with other consciousnesses. It forms the ground for Sartre's philosophical assessment of our relations with others with special reference to conceptualizing the Other in terms of its absolute difference and sincere alterity. Cox supports the stance: "Every person is a being-for-itself, but according to Sartre this is not all they are. There is another aspect of every person's being that is not for-itself but for-others" (23). It becomes relevant in the context of human-human encounter or intersectionality. Macquire observes:

> Even in the most fundamental ways of being, the human existent spills over, so to speak; he transcends the bounds of an individual existence and is intelligible only within a broader framework that we designate as being-[for]-others. (106)

According to Sartre, 'being' is the formative ground for understanding our relationship to others. Therefore, we need to consider ontology since it deals with the revelation of being. Sartre says, "…the Other is an indispensable mediator between myself and me… .I recognize I am as the Other sees me…nobody can be vulgar all alone" (222). He contends that man makes himself what he wants to be vis-à-vis his existential situations privileging the presence of the Other. Importantly, while experiencing others, we also experience the subjectivity of the Other. Seen thus, one experiences oneself as being subjected to the objectification by another subject since "...the Other constitutes me in a new type of being [by making me] his object… .In it I recognize that, as the object of the Other, I am not only for the Other, that is, that I actually am just as the Other sees me" (Theunisson 222). Levy substantiates, "…all human relations can be resolved into this sinister dialectic of looking-at and being looked-at, of objectifying and being objectified in turn" (39). It is a revelation of our

(potential) *conflict-ridden relationship* with the Other(s). Sartre opines: "Everything that goes for me, goes for the Other. While I try to enslave the Other, he tries to enslave me….Conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others" (364). The fact that others can objectify me compels me to perceive others as objects and by doing so I deny them their subjectivity. It also highlights our wish pattern whereby it is desired that the Other should support/back our own self-conceptions. However, such wish-patterns may lead to conflicts.

II

Where Shall We Go This Summer? intensely resonates with the echoes of *Cry, the Peacock* in terms of its similarity with the thematic concern(s)—yet it skillfully broadens the scope of the existential conflict caused by the duality of the self and the Other. Singhal opines that the novel culminates on a positive note and, "…thus novel marks a change in the thematic progression from negative to positive, from alienation to accommodation" (79). The novel regresses into this duality (of the self and the Other) with special reference to Sita's ambivalent relationship with the Other(s), i.e., Raman, Maneka and the father. The conflictual relationships with the Other form the existential trajectory of the novel. It is important to highlight here that the gamut of Sita's being-for-others is far wider than that of Maya (*Cry, the Peacock*) and signifies certain fundamental differences as well. Unlike Maya, Sita is a mother of four children and is expecting a fifth one too. Unlike Maya, she has a detached father, brother (Jivan) and sister (Rekha) corroborating her existential morbidity and hollowness. She keeps sulking at the gnawing sense of absurdity of her existential 'I-It' relations with the Other(s).

It is worth reiterating that each consciousness faces the world alone, and must create itself through its own choices by responding to the things around it, whether these are passive, natural objects or other consciousnesses. In the look of the Other, a consciousness recognizes a point of view which is different from its own and it is unattainable because it is a mark of its own incompleteness. At the same time, the look of the Other threatens to destroy it by turning it into an object. In response, the consciousness can choose to retaliate—to objectify the Other. But in doing so it destroys an external view of itself and must resign itself to the incompleteness of its self-understanding. The consciousness is therefore entrapped: it can dominate the Other, or live with the threat it poses. It is in this context that the present critique explores the duality of

the self and the Other unraveling the existential aspects of one's relationship(s) with the Other. It is in this context that the novel mirrors the marital disharmony between Raman and Sita. Consequent upon a total lack of understanding and the deep existential chasm; there exists no harmony between the husband and wife. Resultantly, Sita loses interest in the normal activities of life; feels bored and alienated inspite of living in a grand city of modern India, i.e., Bombay. Her plight is "…reminiscent of that of Antoine Roquentin's in Jean-Paul Sartre's *Nausea*" (Naikar 77). Being an introvert, she is disgusted with the hustle and bustle of Bombay and feels the world being unsympathetic towards her. Sita "…feels ignored and unwanted. It is a crucial period when one feels a dilemma of existence" (Ram 64). This protagonist of the novel is an extremely sensitive and introvert woman whereas her husband Raman, like Gautama, is a practical, intellectual and rational man. In such circumstances, the birth of conflict between the two is a natural phenomenon. Raman and Sita¯being the creatures of totally different temperaments¯are entrenched in the dynamics of a persistent, confrontational relationship. They are not ready to yield to the wishes of one another. This signifies the play of the dialectics of the Other-as-subject and Other-as-object in the novel. Another noted critic Prasad points outs that this novel deals with "…a recurrent favourite existentialist theme of husband-wife alienation and in-communication" and thus substantiates the ongoing critique of the novel (54). Pitching the argument in this context, the novel presents the poignant tale of Sita's existential anguish and ensuing attempts for authentic being-for-others which Ram interprets as "…an irresistible yearning for a purposeful life" (75). However, she fails to establish this authentic being-for-others. Seen thus, the absurdity of existence overpowers her being and she feels choked as none could be a savior. She fails to interpret the absurd nature of existence. Camus defines absurd as: "This world is not itself reasonable that is all that can be said. But what is absurd is the confrontation of the irrational and the wild longing for clarity whose call echoes in the human heart" (26). It is important to point out that Sita is special, in the sense that the Camusian irrational governs her and hence she finds it almost impossible to authentically relate to the Other. Thus, she finds one of the most intimate relationships to be hostile.

Further, it is worth highlighting that the presence of the irrational is indubitably thicker in *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* than in *Cry, the Peacock*, and the same is true in terms of Sita's altered defiance to the Other(s).

Notably, the novel reinforces the conflictual dimensions of human relationships on account of a fatal recognition of the subjectivity of the Other. However, this novel suggests that revolt is an alternative to the Other-as-subject for the purpose of living the kind of life one desires. And here lies the tragedy of the protagonist, since an all-inclusive being-for-itself is not possible. The being flows towards others as its pre-requisite structural ontological necessity. Consequently, such kind of being-for-itself is not possible and hence it is an illusion. One's self-conception does not depend solely on an individual because others can always objectify the individual with their conflicting perspectives on him/her, resulting in the subject/object duality. Accordingly, Sita is unable to relate herself either with the mainland (Bombay) or the island (Manori) ¯the representative locales of the dualistic structure of the novel. The mainland and the island symbolize conflictual dimensions for Sita. Importantly the two spaces, being distant drums, sound sweeter to her at a distance. The city of Bombay, where Raman wants to live, presents a rational way of living whereas the island¯Sita's fantasy realm¯stands for a sort of primitivism. Another critic Rani observes: "Being unable to accept the cruelty and violence of the world around, she withdrew to magic Island of Manori" (32). However as Sita experiences the difficulties of living on the edge(s), the realization engulfs her with the passage of time. Hence, at the end of the novel she leaves the island "…with relief, worn out by the dreams of Manori, longing for the same, the routine ridden mainland as for a rest in a sanatorium" (Desai 100).

The very beginning of the novel mirrors the conflict-thematicity between Raman and Sita. The text presents "…her [Sita's] overwrought mental condition as the cumulative outcome of a stressful marriage" (Chakravarty 86). Desai comments about their married life, "...all through their married life they had preferred to avoid confrontation. All that they had done, he [Raman] now saw, was to pile on the fury till now when it exploded" (Desai 33). Childhood impressions and the socio-cultural environment in which human beings grow-up, inflate the existential self-conception of an individual followed by a relentless objection to the intrusion of new ideas. Viewed in this context, Sita is completely fed up with her married life at the mainland and also with the fact of her fifth pregnancy. Consider the following textual quote highlighting the conflict dimension between Raman and Sita:

> Her husband was puzzled, therefore, when the fifth time she told him she was pregnant, she did so with a quite paranoiac show of *rage, fear, and revolt*. He *stared* at her with a distaste that told her it did not become her¯a woman now in her forties, greying, aging, to behave with such a total lack of control. Control was an accomplishment which had slipped out of her hold, without his noticing it, and so she wept and flung herself… . 'I'm [Sita] not pleased, I'm frightened'…'It's not easier. It's harder¯harder. It's unbearable. (29, emphasis added)

Importantly, the fifth child deepens the existential gulf and ripens the latent conflict in the narrative. It is important to stress that what is easy for Raman, is unbearable for Sita. In this context, Sita refuses to be an object that the Other can appropriate and use as an instrument. Secondly, she is able to realize Raman taking a perspective on the unborn child and thus it induces an 'internal haemorrhage' in her perspective towards the fifth pregnancy. Thirdly, she experiences the returning *look* of Raman who is judging her at the moment and thus feels her own objectness signifying her inauthentic being-for-others. Raman¯a true representative of the Heideggerian One who always exhibits the technological[1] attitude¯feels that it is a temporal emotion in Sita and would soon fade out. He feels that she, "…would fill again into that comfortable frame of large, placid joy, of glazed satisfaction, of totally inturned pride and regard, as she did usually" (Desai 29) and tells her, "…not much to go now, Sita, it'll soon be over" (Desai 30). On the other hand, Sita experiences herself as being the 'Other-as-object' by such a detached attitude of her husband who fails miserably to measure her anguish even slightly. It results in the existential storm in their relationship. Resultantly, Sita opts to challenge the four walls of the house, including the mainland (the doctor, the hospital and the telephone), with a radical intent to transcend her facticity and the returning look of Raman (the Other)¯though in bad faith. She declares, "…I don't want to have the baby" (Desai 30) and thus shocks Raman. Desai tells us that "…they stared, uncomprehendingly, at each other, more divided than they had been on that day¯she fighting, the other laughing" (31).

Nonetheless, Raman fails to understand what Sita means by saying that she does not want to have the baby. Her declaration makes Raman to become angry and therefore he calls her mad. On knowing Sita's decision not to deliver the baby, Raman deduces that she wants an abortion. On the contrary, she is

thinking of something awkward. She carries an irrational desire not to deliver the baby. She is not willing to bring her baby into a world where the creative impulse has no existence and only an overpowering desire to destroy exists. She wants the expected baby to remain in her womb. Such a wish-pattern manifests her search for peace in life. She asserts, "I mean I want to keep it¯I don't want it to be born" (Desai 32). In this regard for Rao, "Anita Desai dramatizes the conflict between two irreconcilable temperaments of the diametrically opposed attitude towards life" (51). To complicate matters, the news of war in Vietnam, the Rhodesian Jail, the perfidy of Pakistan are other events which add fuel to Sita's combustible attitude towards the world. Sita has been subjected to experience her objectness by the Other(s) and thus she fails to find authenticity in the hostile relationships.

As a response, she cultivates an ambivalent attitude towards the unborn Other. Probably, she does not want the unborn Other to be a part of the hostile world and therefore she desires¯though in bad faith¯to keep the baby in her womb. Her body offers a sort of space where the returning look of the Other is not possible. Hence, she cherishes a fantasy for the purpose of maintaining her privileged subjective freedom signifying a different kind of defiance towards the Other(s) at the same time. It is her way of equaling Garcin's declaration, i.e., "Hell is other people". Secondly, it is also an act of regaining control of (her) self. And for this purpose, it is necessary that Sita must defy the Other and thus create the looking/looked at dichotomous duality. By way of such a stance, Sita opts for the second attitude towards others by being indifferent to Raman and her children. Sartre says:

> In this state of blindness I concurrently ignore the Other's absolute subjectivity as the foundation of my being-in-the-world and being-for-others. In a sense I am reassured, I am self-confident: that is, I am in no way conscious of the fact that the Other's Look can fix my potentialities and my Body. (381)

Sita displays the hatred paradigm towards Raman (the Other) whereby she wants to flee from the judgment of the Other, signifying her alienation and distantiation from Raman. However, speaking dialectically, it is bound to fail. Now, she treasures a desire to go away from her husband. Gupta points out, "…the title of the novel, *Where Shall We Go This Summer*? is highly suggestive.

The interrogative feature of the title is symbolic of the uncertain state of the heroine's mind, of her awareness, and of her indeterminate fate" (116). Her act of leaving her husband just because she does not want to give birth to a baby reveals her bad faith. This bad faith also inculcates the idea to escape from all responsibilities of her situatedness. However, her defiance comes as a reaction to the neatly arranged order of the Other(s) which clashes with her idea of her authentic existence. What seems commonplace and ordinary to Raman is something extraordinary and unusual for Sita. The incident where crows attack a wounded eagle that is, "Too young to fly" is a major occurrence for her (Desai 38). She tries to scare away the crows with Karan's gun but does not succeed. It appears as if she sees her own plight in the eagle. On the other hand, her husband declares the death of the eagle as a triumph. Raman considers the crows victorious because they have killed a bigger creature. Sita considers that crows were selfish creatures that could not match the flight of the eagle and they ganged up to kill it. Sharma in her book *Symbolism in Anita Desai's Novels* states that "…the crows are the symbol of civilization, particularly of the city people" (82). Further, she finds "…civilization torn between the reality of cruelty and the illusion of compassion embodied respectively in the images of the crow and the eagle" (Sivaramkrishna 22). Elucidating the difference motif in the relationship of Raman and Sita, another critic Sharma in a book titled *Anita Desai* observes: "They accuse each other of madness because they look at reality from different perspectives" (98).

Sita exhibits different habits and conceptual thoughts which act as hindrances in her adjusting to new situations and persons. Rao observes that the cause of her unhappiness originates from "…her constitutional inability to accept the values and the attitudes of the [the others]" (51). Having failed to have an authentic relationship with the Other, she refuses to accept the harsh realities of life which most people, including her husband, submit to very easily. She equates her condition to that of a jellyfish "…washed up by the waves stranded on there the sandbar" (Desai 149). Not only this, she never adjusts according to the circumstances. When she used to live with her in-laws, she never tries to adjust to the family environment. The "…family members of her husband's house frighten and appall her" (Dash 31). Further, the undercurrents of suspicion and doubt lie at the core of Raman-Sita relationship. When they meet a man near the Ajanta caves, she likes/praises the man whereas Raman exhibits his radically different perspective/reservations thereto and says, "…he

was a fool¯he did not know which side of the road to wait on" (Desai 52). Raman goes to the extent of suspecting Sita, and regards that her admiration for and interest in the hitchhiker was practically "…an act of infidelity" adding to the existential woes of the protagonist (Desai 33).

Another reason for the brewing of disharmony between Sita and Raman is their conflicting perspectives on reality. She lives in the world of fantasy and miracles. For her, Manori is the real world and it is pitted against the world of Bombay where struggles and sufferings are the result of human apathy towards nature and real human deeds. The average human beings do not attract her. Prasad writes, "She fails to adapt herself to society at large and boldly finds faults in dehumanizing norms and values that have a stronghold on its members and have relegated them to the state of animals" (56). On the contrary, Raman has a different perspective on reality. For him the mainland is the real world which provides all the modern facilities to all of them. There are schools and colleges for the children to study, hospitals and doctors for the new baby and the factory for one's professional earning. Sita hates selfishness, greed, craving for money and other materialistic pleasures, and she questions the credibility of these things. Therefore, she strenuously strives to free herself from such materialistic chains. Since the Other represents an insensitive world, the conflict between Sita and her husband is consequent upon the dialectics of the self and the Other. This compels Sita to withdraw into her own protective shell and to choose a new world of her imagination. In this sense Sita appears to take a Neitzschean resolve, i.e. "…the secret of harvesting from existence the fruitfulness is¯to *live dangerously* (Nietzsche 228, emphasis original). Hence Sita resolves to go to the Manori island¯the land of miracles. Notably, it is from this strange island, peopled with worshipping followers of her father, that Sita has imbibed an intense imagination and idealism. Unable to negotiate the duality of her existence, she feels that her anguish can be healed with magic.

Sita's second visit to the island manifests her insistent search for peace, tranquility and harmony. She yearns to rediscover the magic of Manori to protect the unborn baby according to her (delusional) wish-pattern. Sita is living a romantic dream. Interestingly, the façade of the island soon begins to reveal its hollowness and concavity. It is a place where darkness is all pervasive. Rao comments, "It's a story of illusions melting away in the cold light of the everyday and the commonplace" (57). The desire for glory and magic is occasioned with a perplexing fiasco. Further the look of Moses, Miriam and others leave a

destabilizing and debilitating effect on Sita. They *look* at her with a sense of unease and wonder if she was the mistress of the house at the island. Importantly she is compared to her fabled father and is thus signified as "…the unworthy offspring of the illustrious and well-remembered father" (Desai 25). Viewed in this perspective her escape to the island lays bare its emptiness and paves the way for her subsequent existential despair. The silent awareness of losing out the temporal coherence of being excavates her despair and highpoints the fragility of her existence. When Sita reaches the island along with her children, the Other gets further solidified. Now she finds herself in conflict with the children, Karan and Menaka, who refuse to adjust to the primitive life of the island. They replace Raman and subject Sita to their look and thus corroborate her anguish. When city bred children express their surprises and discomfort over the absence of proper electricity, she tries to calmly satisfy them and says, "…you can see the sky lit-up" (Desai 25). It also explicates the idea that motherly instincts fail Sita. Since they inhabit dissimilar worldviews, her kids fail to share intimacy with her. As a result, they identify more with their father. Having failed to understand the real cause of her monotonous existence, her cold understanding of the Other(s) alienates her further. She experiences the duality of significance and insignificance. In such circumstances, she *chooses* to eulogize the bullock cart as a symbol of simple and rural life. Importantly, nature is used as a potent tool to present the motif of the existential duality in the novel. It also mirrors her ambivalent moods vis-à-vis the duality of her mental states. It is worth considering that in the beginning of the novel, nature at Manori is presented in terms of its harshness and severity *yet* it also offers solace to the alienated Sita. After being rejected by own children, she finds nature as the only friend on this remote island. On the other hand, the urbanite nature is full of tensions and anxieties and induces Sita to perceive this world as an asylum of mad men. This apparent contradiction embodies her inner conflict. In spite of her well-nurtured defense mechanism, she fails to respond to the look of the children and "…every time she caught their eyes, the accusation in them, made her turn abruptly away, having no answers for them" (Desai 27). As a result, she relies on the world of smoke (cigarettes) as if it equals her existential fog vis-à-vis the dialectics of the self and the Other. Coming to Manori is her step towards seeking solace from the dull life of the city. But her decision soon refracts its cracks as her children start keeping a

distance from her. They hoist the flag of the *present* at the island and hence bruise Sita. The desired solace stands challenged by the Other. Menaka is a thorough foil to Sita and manifests a compelling challenge to her mother's swollen subjectivity. Menaka's strong identification with the father expands Sita's anguish. She feels that all are violent upon her and treat her (as) Other-as-object only. Later, when Sita and Menaka discuss about science and art, Sita says, "Science can't be satisfactory… . It leads you to dead-end. There are no dead-ends, no, in art. That is something spontaneous, Meneka, and alive, and creative … ." but for Menaka, "…art is nonsense" (Desai 108). However, Menaka is the one who is able to see through Sita's delusional world and declares that "…there is no light" there (Desai 23). It objectifies Sita's magical island. In addition to this, Menaka hates Sita's proclivity for drama and feels most disgusted and hurt by it. Menaka is the one who writes a letter to her father and requests him to take them (the children) away from the world of her mother and thus she substantiates their distantiation from her mother. Menaka's intense hatred paradigm towards her mother makes Sita realize her own objectness by the returning look of the Other. Bande remarks: "To the world she appears crazy. Her attitude, her outburst of anger, her appearance… ." (114). On a condensing note, Sita's futile attempts to impose her interests on the children are occasioned with their incessant disapprovals.

Now it is vital to assess Sita's weird childhood as well as her relationship with the father at *Jeevan Ashram*¯ " *…the Home of the Soul*" (Desai 57 emphasis added)¯so as to decode the finer nuances of the duality of the self and the Other in the novel. Particularly, Sita's father is far different from Maya's father. This is a relationship which lacks love and implies an exhaustive neglect of Sita. The father, being "…a political celebrity" has no time for the children (Raizada 41). He represents a larger than life public figure eulogized by the public at large. The inhabitants perceive him as a saint and the island belongs to him. Interestingly the distanced father evokes a strange curiosity in Sita and, she yearns to explore the clandestine aspects of his magical world. Such a curiosity compels Sita to keep a constant look at the Other (the father). However, the magical realm of the father soon extends repulsion to Sita. As she comes to know that the father mixes powder to cure people's tumour and boils, she realizes that the father does not have any superhuman powers. In addition, her father's obstinacy for maintaining a primitive life also suggests his tactical strategy

for living like a legend amongst the village folks at the island. Sita is also suspicious of an illicit relationship between her father and elder sister Rekha. Her father's "…unusual tenderness towards [Rekha] confuses her with strong internal questions" (Meitei 33). Sita is also suspicious of another illicit relationship between her father and Phoolmaya, who beget a son after ten years of marriage. Her father's mysteriousness is further strengthened by the narrative clue that Sita's mother did not die but ran away to Benaras which implies the chord of a strained relationship between the father and the mother. Importantly we never "…learn Sita's mother's assessment of her husband. It is one of the potentially disruptive and destructive silences in the novel" (Bhatnagar 109). Seen thus, Sita is a discarded, unwanted and worthless daughter living in a hostile world which emits absurdity and anguish. The Other intimidates and thus treats her as being-in-itself only. None is trying to reach out to her in an authentic manner. The relations lack mutual reciprocity and constitutive otherness and add to the oscillation of master-slave dialectic leading to the conflictual, dichotomous dynamics of the self and the Other in the novel. Therefore after the death of the father, the family disintegrates in spur of a moment. Rekha does not care to shed tears on the demise of the father and decodes it as "…a moment of release from the old man's love" (Desai 99). Sita's brother Jivan too disappears after a couple of days from the island leaving Sita to hold on to her discolored existence till Raman comes to the island to take her back to mainland (Bombay)¯signifying a new hope for the wretched Sita. Such incidents cause a heavy and visible damage to Sita's innocent mind and she feels like "…an island on the island" (Ram 74). The preceding discussion reveals that Sita's childhood and her relationships with her father, Rekha and Jivan are devoid of authenticity and thus add to her existential aberration vis-à-vis her being-for-others.

The foregone discussion throws ample light on Sita's saying 'No' to the Other and thus foregrounds her defiance thereto. It is a 'No' to the meaningless and hollow relationship with the Other. The Other does not appear to transcend its subject position so as to alleviate the in-betweenness existing between the self and the Other. However, Sita displays a quality distinct from Maya in terms of transcending her facticity and dialectically moving closer to the Other and thus she manifests a yearning for establishing 'We-relationship'/'I-Thou' relationship towards the end of the novel. Expanding the critique to wider denominations, it is important to

point out here that Sartre in his later work *Notebooks for an Ethics* holds that it is possible for a consciousness to experience a meaningful relation with the Other whereby both of the participants can remain subjects. He labels this sort of relationship as authentic social relation or 'we-relation'. Seen thus, Sita confirms that, "…self is not a constant, stable entity. On the contrary, it is something one becomes, one constructs" (Nehamas 7). Sartre in his key essay "Existentialism is a Humanism" also maintains a similar stance: "There is no human nature, because there is no God to have a concept of it. Man simply is. Not that he is simply what he conceives himself to be, but he is what he wills… . Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself" (349). Sita endorses to such a converted consciousness towards the end of the novel. The third part of the novel aptly contains the metaphor of monsoon and thus it makes a strong suggestion of Sita's converted consciousness. Towards the end of the novel, Sita tells Raman that she did not desert them and states: "No, no¯desertion, that's cowardly. I wasn't doing anything cowardly…I was saying 'No' but positively, *positively* saying No" (Desai 135 emphasis original). Such positivity on Sita's part connotes an invocation to the Other to look at her in the framework of the we-relationship. Towards the end of the novel, she starts interpreting the island differently. Consider the following textual extract: "Sita felt a spasm of fear at her bravado, her wild words, her impulsive actions that had flung [her] alone onto this island surrounded by wild seas. It was no place in which to give birth. There was no magic here¯*the magic was gone*" (Desai 104 emphasis added). Hence, she highlights dynamism for constructiveness seeking self-direction and authenticity of her being-for-others. And now, "The thought of [Raman's] adult, quiet and critical company gave her a sharp sense of pleasure" (Desai 118) and later when Raman reaches the island, she feels, "…comfort, security [realizing that] it was the second time he had come to fetch her from the island [and now] nodded and waited for him to say more" (Desai 121-121). Now Sita displays an existential transcendence aimed at cultivating we-relationship with the Other. She aims at what Gadamer calls 'fusion of horizons'. In view of such phenomenological expansion of Sita's being, she starts comprehending Raman's suffering during the weeks she has been away including his worry and anxiety about her, the unborn children, Menaka and Karan living alone amidst the wilderness of the island. Understanding from this perspective, Sita's duality appears to

embrace the point of an existential negotiation/synthesis. Sita's return from the island is due to the fact that she begins to realize the difficulties the Other(s) must be facing on account of her withdrawal. Sita is able to make sense of the irrational/absurdity of life. It is important to note that Sita's retreat to the mainland is skillfully left open-ended by the novelist. Hence, it may be interpreted as a dialectical resolution of Sita's existential woes. Her return "…to the mainland signifies her return to life" (Anand 100). However, after return to Bombay, the text speaks nothing about her later life.

The analysis of *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* lays bare the dialectical manifestation of the dynamics of the self and the Other. Whereas Maya fails to negotiate the duality of the self and the Other, Sita embraces—silently though—the notion of existential possibilities and thus negotiates the contradictory pulls of her existence by preferring mainland over the island towards the end of the novel. She is able to negotiate such dualistic/existential cacophony by co-opting the Sartrean converted consciousness so as to cultivate the 'we-relationship' with Raman (the Other). Such a decision grants her existential autonomy to synthesize the dualistic pattern of her existence and paves the way for an "…authentic way of being which transcends the dialectic of bad faith" (Sartre, *Notebooks for an Ethics* 473). On a condensing note, the Sartrean framework of being-for-itself, being-for-others and we-relationship adds a new dimension to the evaluated novel and hence it makes a value addition in the existing corpus of critical studies on Anita Desai.

Endnotes

1 The term technology, in Heideggerian context, denotes treating everything having no value independent from the value one gives to it. Everything is treated as a *stock* under this attitude.

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Communal Consciousness and Contemporary Indian English Women Poetry: A Select Study of Imtiaz Dharker, Seeme Qasim and Rukmini Bhaya Nair

Shweta Tiwari

Communalism has always manifested itself in socio-political and cultural realms in the form of systemic violence, genocides and terror strikes. The insidious march of communalism has exacerbated social divisions and made the contemporary world a precarious socio-political domain. Targeting people on the basis of their religious and ethnic affiliations has led to the communalization of not only political but socio-cultural spaces also. The intensification of the national movement paved way for power politics of which communalism became an integral part. The year 1947 saw the acme of communal-political nexus and its socio-psychological repercussions. It resulted in an unprecedented demographic displacement and violence on both sides of the border. The traumatic stress of this cataclysm reverberates in social debates till today. This politics of faith has had a checkered yet atavistic existence that has continued to affirm itself through the anti-Sikh pogrom in 1984, Bombay riots in 1992, Gujrat riots in 2002, Muzaffarnagar riots in 2013 and so on. Today communal occurrences are no longer sporadic in nature hence they create a greater upheaval than before. Aided by parochial political organizations and facilitated by economic and technological linkages, communalism stands transformed after Partition. Secularism and democracy are among the first casualties of dogmatism that exhibits itself through misguided religious movements like *jihad*, Saffronisation and quest for Khalistan. From its reductive understanding as a byproduct of religious intolerance, communalism has gradually been understood as a complex phenomenon with numerous variables and agendas at stake. These events have been so exhaustively discussed and debated in literary narratives that they now occupy as much a spatial space as temporal in both the personal and national memory. Contemporary responses to the issue of communalism explore the role of socio-political factors in breeding such attacks, the changes in the characteristics of communalism from Partition to the present times and threats that communal moorings pose to the mainstream secular democracy.

Indian women poetry like other literary genres is a rich corpus that chronicles the historical and cultural nuances of women's experiences through time and space. From 1960 onwards, Indian women poets adopted a confrontationist stance incorporating multifarious issues like patriarchy, freedom and female body within their thematic ambit. Poetry was no longer a product of pensive reflection or fanciful indulgence but a means to foreground their angst and dilemmas. In the twentieth century Indian women poets migrated from the confines of insular domestic spaces to traverse the public sphere. The poetic praxis of Imtiaz Dharker, Meena Alexander, Sujata Bhatt, and Seeme Qasim replaces the passive conformity to decrepit models of womanhood and nationalism with an awareness of community-specific violence and religious hypocrisies. Indian women poetry today has become dialogic and interrogative in nature and is not simply ideology-oriented as before. Kumar has aptly stated that "Instead of moving from complexity to rhetoric, as is normally the case with protest literature, it moves from rhetoric to complexity" (360). Since, these women poets share with men the same retrogressive professional and political spaces it becomes imperative for them to contest for inclusion. Women poets are vocally active in their day to day life which invariably leads to the re-structuring of their cultural and communal identity through the poetic medium. They are now vigilant about socio-cultural, political and economic conditions of the society which takes this poetic corpus much beyond the unidimensional feminist axis. Indian women poetry in its present avatar discusses issues like caste, nationality, communal violence, politics and market forces, marking a conscious deviation from the gendered polarity of home and the world. Contemporary women writers' response to communalism has furnished a complex and nuanced understanding of the phenomenon. The multifocal response of women poets to the issue of communal violence signifies their making inroads in the public sphere. These socially sensitive and politically aware poets document the apprehensions of people living in a communally susceptible society.

The present paper seeks to analyze the creative feedback of women poets to the problem of communalism vis-à-vis the poetry of Imtiaz Dharker, Seeme Qasim and Rukmini Bhaya Nair. It will try to place their poems within various theoretical debates that surround the genesis and propagation of communalism in the country. Several questions will be tackled in order to understand the ideological positions of these poets. Some of them are –

does Dharker's transcultural exposure disengage her from the root-level problems in India? Does Seeme Qaism's primary focus on Muslim experiences deprive her poetry of a horizontal sweep? Does Rukmini Bhaya Nair's interplay between the esoteric and the mundane dilute the effectiveness of the content or provides continuity to it? The paper records only the contemporary literary responses to communalism in detail while Partition is just used as a vantage point.

I

Women poets like Imtiaz Dharker, Meena Alexander, Sujata Bhatt, and Seeme Qasim venture from the secure enclosures of the inner space into the outer world characterized by hate politics, regressive nationalism, communal genocide and global terrorism. The urge for equal participation in the construction of a new social order is captured by Dharker in the poem "Open" thus:

> Strange for someone as secretive
> as me, I don't mind.
> I'm opening up the public spaces.
> There are no intruders.
> They own this place as much as you,
> As much as me. (50)

After attaining independence from the colonial rule the same practice – in which the majority denied the minorities of education and modern lifestyle – was followed. The right-winged fundamentalists vindicated the chronic antipathy between Hindus and Muslims on account of the difference in their religious beliefs and historical backgrounds. The Muslim radicals maintained a myopic view of Islam, discouraging any moderation in the precepts laid down in the Quran. It is ironic that religious dogmas were of paramount importance to these self-appointed custodians of religion while God himself in "Postcards by God" says, "I walk around the battered streets/ distinctly lost/looking for landmarks/ from another promised past" (8). Dharker suggests that while an anguished God laments the predicament of human beings split by technological development and lack of ethics, people are busy endorsing their own set of faith. The communal leaders further aggravated the chasm between the two communities by following a 'no *beti-roti'* relationship (no intercommunity marriages and partaking of food) between both the communities. Akhilesh Kumar in this respect says, "Communal violence operates on the idea that *kafirs* or aliens (not

necessarily people from different religion) have no right to exist with the members of other communities" (72). On the other hand, orthodox Hindus aim at cultural homogenization as the word 'Hindustan' means a land for Hindus. Incidents of lynching Muslims and Dalits who are found consuming beef is more than a case of traditional veneration of the cow. It is an example of politicization of cultural symbols in favour of the Hindutva agenda. The poem "*Gomata*" by Rukmini Bhaya Nair was intended as a feminist text but it is relevant in today's attendant identity politics coalescing around the animal. While the fundamentalists vehemently oppose the Pink Revolution, the plight of the incognizant cow is captured in the following lines:

> though you are sacred, you are not beloved
> thrusting your nose into city garbage
> unembarrassed, a fly-blown beggar
> driven from the dusty villages
> how do you stand it, cow? (81)

Contrary to the idea of India as a nation, certain insular institutions have always been working on the agenda of a 'Hindu *rashtra*'. They uphold the jingosim '*Ghar Wapsi*' meaning those who have been forced or allured to convert to Islam or Christianity should be brought back to the Hindu fold and this would not be a conversion but merely their returning home. In the country where Hindutva ideologues dominate the social and political discourse, it is implied that a non-Hindu has to submit to a series of coercive loyalty tests. Dharker's poem "They'll Say: She Must be from Another Country" resonates a similar concern when she says, "all of us freaks/who aren't able to give/our loyalty to fat old fools/the crooks and thugs/ who wear the uniform/that gives them the right/to wave a flag" (33). In "Being an Indian", Qasim contemplates how her cultural and religious identity becomes more important over her being an Indian during a communal tussle. Following are the opening lines of the poem:

> The carnage makes me talk
> about being an Indian;
> of the fact
> that my roots
> can be traced
> to the plains

of Uttar Pradesh. (11)

The minority-majority debate has lead to a number of communal conflagrations in the country. In this regard, Syed Najiullah theorizes the secondary status of the Muslims in the country. He observes that after independence the Muslim leadership was primarily concerned with peripheral issues like Muslim personal laws, status of Urdu in the country instead of focusing on the seminal problems like national integrity and economic development. Since the minority politics was dominated by orthodox religious issues, the incident of demolition of the Babri mosque was not treated as an alarming socio-economic condition but as a religio-communal feud. Seeme Qasim deplores the state of affairs which make Hindus look upon Muslims with distrust. In "Indian Muslim" she rues, "expressions change/and within seconds/I become another race" (4). This socio-religious schism was presented to Man Mohan Singh in a report titled "Social Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community of India" which stated thus:

> Apparently, the social, cultural and public interactive spaces in India can be very daunting for the Indian Muslims. The general sense of unease among Muslims can be seen on a number of fronts % in the relationships that exist between the Muslims and other Socio-Religious Communities (SRCs), as well as, in the variations in understanding and interpreting them. . . They carry a double burden of being labeled as "anti-national" and as being "appeased" at the same time. While Muslims need to prove on a daily basis that they are not "anti-national" and "terrorists", it is not recognized that the alleged "appeasement" has not resulted in the desired level of socio-economic development of the Community. In general, Muslims complained that they are constantly looked upon with a constant degree of suspicion not only by certain sections of society but also public institutions and governance structures. (11)

The report makes it evident that the Muslims are stereotyped as uneducated and bigoted while the Hindus are regarded as xenophobic and dominating. This systematic stereotyping subtly leads to communal polarization and accentuates the mutual distrust among the members of different communities. Qasim in "Going There" foregrounds her apprehension about interacting with people in Gujrat after the Godhara massacre. She says,

"How will I deal/with things/in Gujrat now/whenever I disclose/my name?" (6).

II

It will be naïve to suggest that communal vandalism has its roots only in religious differences. Riots are often used to cloak a number of complexities like class and electoral politics that operate alongside religion. In a socially backward and communally-split country like India, religion is a potential tool to mobilize the masses to realize class aspirations. This brings one to the Leftist school of thought that relates communal violence to class struggle, underdeveloped economy and ballot box politics. Asghar Ali Engineer avers that the micro-level factors that trigger communal violence may be religiously motivated but they are directly related to the macro-level factors i.e. socio-economic development of the country. Incidents of communal outbreak mostly occur in underdeveloped or developing urban areas. The number of deprived and unemployed people carrying hostility against the state and social discrimination is large in these places. Thus, their acute sense of neglect can be easily converted into rage by the ruling elites and political members on the pretext of religion. The article, "Organized Crimes, Violence and Politics" cites Judge Paolo Borsellino's quote, "Politics and mafia are two powers on the same territory; either they make war or they reach an agreement" (1). It should be noted that despite being actual beneficiaries, the politicians and elites never engage in the riots directly. They organize crimes by not only instigating the vulnerable masses but also by supplying means for the execution of violence. The poet castigates the politicians who under the garb of secularism actually ignite the communal passions of the people for electoral gain. In "Custodians of Republic" Dharker writes:

Speeches are read
A few points made
Somewhere else in the city
A blade finds flesh.
Here in this quiet civil room
Permission has been given
For the carnage to begin. (27)

The demolition of Babri mosque on 6th December 1992 unleashed a bloody trail of communal agitation in which thousands of people and

incalculable properties perished. The political overtone in Dharker's poem is unmistakable but she does not provide a religious identity to the perpetrators, as they could be the members of any community. In the poem "8th January 1993" (following "6th December 1992") Dharker describes the scene of a house claimed by religious fanatics as follows:

The bolt bangs in.
A match is struck and thrown.
The burning has begun...
And this is left:
Blackened Saris, Trousers', petticoats
The shell of a T.V. set a tin box of bangles
And face cream
Like a looted face
That opened its mouth,
In a scream
That never found an end. (81)

A similar dread hovers in Qasim's mind when she thinks about visiting a place with an Islamic name as it could be the first target of a communal scuffle. Despite being assured by the ruling party, she records her dilemma in the poem "In Ahmedabad" in the following lines:

Uncertainty begins
the moment I reach
the airport
even though the BJP
states on a TV screen
'Things are normal
In Gujrat.' . . .
On the way
To Muslim Shah-e-Alam
I'm told, 'But that's
The first place
To be attacked
If there's a riot tonight.' (7)

According to Asutosh Varshney an incident can be termed as communal riot if "there is violence and two or more communally identified groups confront each other or members of other groups at some point during the violence" (363). The lackadaisical attitude of the police in

communal riots and governmental inaction in bringing to book the offenders is encapsulated in the poem "The Museum of Death" by Qasim. The poet posits thus:

> Some will be forced to come
> With shamed faces.
> They were safe in their houses
> When their neighbour's
> Was burnt
> And the police watched. (14)

III

The most inhuman atrocities have always been reserved for women whenever communal riots have taken place. The barbaric victimization of women during Partition riots reverberates in social and academic debates even today. Saneya observes;

> More so is the case in the acts of violence like riots and genocides, where women usually keep away from any active participation in violence but have always bore the worst burnt as victims: the tortured, the raped, the burnt, the widowed, the orphaned, the-one-left-without-a-son/husband/father/brother. (241)

Another theoretical perspective to the communalism debate is in Veena Das's expression the "sexualization of social contract" (1). It will be a lopsided approach if only dominant religious ideologies are held accountable for nurturing the attacks on women during communal riots. Gendered communal violence is the outcome of archetypes formed about women as being commodities for male-pleasure and ironically the flag-bearers of honor of their communities at the same time. SK Fisher remarks, "Ethnic cleansing or genocide specifically target women and direct both sexual and reproductive violence towards them as women are seen as the cultural and biological repositories of ethnic or religious groups" (91). However, the problem is deceptively uncomplicated. A myth that the historians and sociologists adhered to for a long time was that the modesty of a woman is essentially violated by the member/members of the other community. On the other hand, the reality is that women, irrespective of their religion are subjected to sexual violence by all the communally frenzied men. A communally violated woman is several times more vulnerable than a normally oppressed woman but the society makes her undergo the

same trauma at regular intervals either propelling her to commit suicide or seek revenge. Contemporary women poets vocalize their concerns on gendered violence with great poignancy. Qasim in "In Ahmedabad" laments "of blood, of swords/inserted into/ten-year-old girls" (9). Rukmini Bhaya Nair in the note to *Ayodhya Cantos* informs about her encounter with young girls selling marigold garlands in Ayodhya who refused to divulge their names fearing their identities would be betrayed.

Dharker's anthology *The Terrorist at My Table* raises pertinent question in the simplest language:

> We live now working, travelling, eating, listening to the news, preparing for attack. What do anyone of us know about the person who shares this street, this house, this table, this body? When life is in the hands of a fellow-traveler, a neighbor, a lover, son or daughter, how does the world shift and reform itself around our doubt, our belief?

Seeme Qasim also registers a similar concern in the poem "Don't Stay. . . Go" when she says, "The most dangerous place is your neighbourhood" (22). Same idea also finds expression in the opening lines of the poem "The Right Word". The poet records the pervasiveness and inescapable presence of violence which skulks just at the doorstep:

> Outside the door
> Lurking in the shadows
> is a terrorist. (27)

The first poem "After Gujrat" of *After Gujrat and Other Poems* by Seeme Qasim records the snippets she can recall after communal riots following the razing down of Babri mosque. She miserably recollects the images of blackened domes of the mosque, slaughtered animals, mangled bodies of women, destroyed lives and eerie silence as:

> After Gujrat, I remember
> those other death trains,
> the screech. . .
> thse old destroyed lives,
> their torn clothes
> their hacked breasts. (3)

Gold, women and land signifying economy, gender and ownership respectively have been the root cause of discontent since times immemorial. Qasim in a poem titled "Nights" rightly records, "Behind all

the fighting there are three things/ says the boy from my village/ Zar, Zan, Zameen" (Beyond October, 45). The same report by Rajindar Sachar and others also read:

> Markers of Muslim identity the *burqa*, the *purdah*, the beard and the *topi* while adding to the distinctiveness of the Indian Muslims have been a cause of concern for them in the public realm. These markers have very often been a target for ridiculing the community as weel as for looking upon them with suspicion. (12)

Dharker registers a vociferous outcry against these "markers" of identity made compulsory by religion. The denunciation of socio-religious dogmatism in the name of community honor is most potently encased in her poem "Honour Killing". It speaks of a Muslim woman who despises the orthodoxy of religion which indirectly marginalizes women. She remonstrates thus:

> This black veil of faith
> That made me faithless
> To myself.
> That tied my mouth,
> Gave my God a devil's face
> And muffled my own voice. (13)

In the wake of communal violence and its aftermath, women are forced to resort to gross survival strategies. Qasim's poem "Bombay Dairy-1" portrays the desperate measures taken by them in the words, "Zubedia's children are now called/Paro and Raj/ Her walls are covered with calendars of gods" (23).

IV

Mythology embodies the Jungian archetype of the collective. Images, myths and religion inherited by individuals are potential symbols which get actualized when an interaction with the outer world takes place. Thus the hegemonic status of mythology in promoting bigotry cannot be ignored. Contemporary women poets create new literary strategies to negotiate with the dominant culture. Apart from the use of unadorned language, understated irony and laxity these poets make a liberal use of myths in their poems. They do not hark back on mythology and indigenous cultural frames to derive inspiration or borrow poetic idioms but to rewrite them sans their ascendancy. One such classic example is Rukmini Bhaya Niar's

Ayodhya Cantos. The rewriting of the *kanda* (cantos) of Ramayana against the backdrop of communal violence precisely partition and the demolition of Babri mosque gives it a contemporary slant. The monkey-god Hanuman is envisaged as a tea-stall owner and Sita as a young girl named Sitara, whose religious identity is kept obscure on purpose. Vishnu (later reborn as Ram in Ayodhya) is rendered as a cosmic politician in the anthology. Unlike Dharker's God, Nair's Gods are not divine but very human. 'The Hanuman Kanda' swings among Hanuman, Vishnu and Mahatma Gandhi rendering an inclusive picture of the nation by fusing sacred images with profane. Hanuman who is traditionally a staunch devotee of Lord Ram registers his discomposure at being troubled by a pack of goons headed by the astute leader Vishnu. He ironically remarks, "Vishnu's up to his fluttery tricks again" (21), "What did he ever do to deserve such fearsome devotion?"(23), "A Bajrang-Dal stray would do, muttering the Hanuman Chalisa/ Misquoting the Gita" (23).

Mahatma Gandhi's death is merged with mythological figments and dealt with a tinge tragic-comedy. In the sonnet "Tees January, 1948", Mahatma Gandhi's "bullet-stopping phrase – He Ram!" fails to save him as "Vishnu the Preserver, plugged in to eternity's walkman" is too preoccupied to pay any attention to his plea (22). Army forces are seen marching up and down and an atmosphere of mayhem breaks out in the city. Hanuman's reaction to the entire commotion is described in the most humanly manner thus:

> Hanumat the puffy-cheeked cannot manage such feats, cannot
> Smile beatifically at dissonance. When memories plague him,
> He sticks his fingers in his ears and yells, which is why he seems
> Fated to remain – or so he imagines – keeper of a small-time serai,
> At the crossroads in Ayodhya. . . (22)

The overwhelming religious ferocity of Hindus culminated in the destruction of the Babri mosque in 1992. The chorus in the sonnet "Fragments" urges the God/Politician to justify the monumental religious procession of the *Rath Yatra* in an area which first of all needs modest civic amenities. The chorus sings:

> Why did Vishnu push his rath yatra
> Into the calm obscurity of Ayodhya?

Listen, Bhavani, we're sick of politics
Ayodhya lacks basic civil amenities
The sacred Sarayu flows just nearby
But drinking water's in short supply. (26)

The 'Sita Kanda' is juxtaposed with the gory episode of Partition. The ingenuous young Sitara is shown oblivious of the repercussion that would accompany Partition whereas Hanuman is intimated by the same. The sonnet reads:

Partition Hanuman shudders
Again, and the earth trembles. But dauntless Sita, earth's most
Favoured daughter, jagaddhatri, just giggles.
. . . Sita knocks one last time. (28)

In the next sonnet "White", the poet narrates the rape of Sita/Sitara. It conjures an ambience of uncertainty and fear when the lonely Sitara is frightened in darkness and impels brother Hanuman to accompany her. While she is raped, the "creation's guardian" (26), Vishnu presides over the entire scene as a passive onlooker.

Sitara is alone. Clamour and fetid darkness. *Chalo Hanuman Bhai*!
No answer. The peanuts spill from her helpless grip. Chunni pulled
Away, hair in a mess, breast squeezed in a wild caress. She is parted.
Rudra Vishnu, bringer of tears, watches Sita's plight. (29)

Since the religious identity of Sita is not betrayed, it defies easy categorization of the victim-victimizer. As mentioned earlier, communal stereotype of the sadist essentially being the 'other' also falls into question in the sonnet. Thus, Sita/ Sitara embodies all the women who became a prey to sexual savagery of men during partition.

In the 'Vishnu Kanda' various incarnations of Lord Vishnu like Narasimha, Vamana, Parasurama and Rama and their mythical tales are played upon. Parshurama (literally implying Ram with an axe) was the sixth avatar of Lord Vishnu and quite infamous for his ire. He is believed to have wiped off the *kshatriya* clan twenty one times. In the contemporary setting, Nair replaces the *kshatriyas* with Muslims and Parshurama becomes the manifestation of Hindus. He is shown committed to torch Muslim houses and shatter down the mosques. However the chorus supplies him with the graphic details of the Ayodhya of the Kalyuga which is in stark contrast with the Ayodhya of the Treta yuga:

The truth is Ayodhya is a dump. Our
Economy is in a ghastly slump. Cowdung's
Sold at two rupees a lump. Religion's even
Cheaper! Guns, homemade like lemonade
Sold up and down the temple lanes. Gandhi
Locked in a cage on Ayodhya's ghats for fear. (40)

Conclusion

Contemporary women poetry gravitates from stringent adherence to received literary models to experimentation and from sloganeering to a non-Oriental, secular nationalism. Poetry by women today participates in the global system of education, politics and economics that has replaced the obsolete colonial and patriarchal networks. The engagement of these poets in the issue of violence is not merely a gendered response but they understand it from multiple focal points. The aesthetic-activist response to the issue of communalism does not limit itself only to the documentation of violence that occurs during the riots but it inspects from a secular perspective, the socio-political and economic elements that triggers such events. The critical analysis of the poems above lays bare the confluence of sensibilities of these poets in raising the issues like violence, communalism, nationalism and gender yet differing in their mode of projection of the same. These poets offer a nuanced understanding of the communal problem from the paradoxical vantage point of being both revered and violated as a woman. The poetry of all the three poets is suffused with symbolic emblems that approximates and appropriates the complex ramifications of communal riots in the country. Their poetry enters the fraught terrain of the public sphere creating a parallel discourse on the complex experiences of communalism.

Instead of limiting her outlook, Dharker's locational embeddedness enables her to point out the similarity in social perils across the nations she has inhabited. She primarily negotiates with the matrix of home, gender, communal conflict and cultural displacement highlighting the alarming difference between the ideal state affairs and the reality. So instead of alienating her from the fundamental problems in India her globally-travelled self qualifies her to examine the sectarianism ingrained in every culture across the world.

Seeme Qasim utilizes her Islamic identity in her poems. In an inornate

yet bold language she foregrounds the inhuman outrage that her community has been subjected to. She also shows how stereotypes about a community lead to segregation and discrimination. Apart from Gujrat and Bombay massacre she also evokes dreadful violence of the Apartheid in her poems. Qasim as a poet displays immense depth both in understanding and expressing the barbarity of communal violence but this depth slightly makes her outlook Muslim-centric.

Rukmini Bhaya Nair should be especially applauded for humanizing the theological characters to cut across the boundaries of nation, class, religion and gender. Her poems are not a programmatic documentation of communal violence. On the contrary, they challenge everything ranging from mythology to politics and Partition to present day communalism. The poet makes use of metaphorical language and mythological episodes to enrich one's understanding of the intertwined complexities of religious fundamentalism, history and politics.

Women's representation in literary and creative texts seemed immutable till they provided strong alternative discourses on their lived reality. The response of these women poets to communal violence despite being discreetly rebellious carries a prophetic momentum. The poetic transmutation of the trauma of violence is actually an appeal to the people to be more accommodating. Communal riots dislocate the rhythm of one's everyday life and poetic articulations like these become an important medium to restore a sense of proportion in the lives of the victims. Women poets do not recommend universally- proposed but failed solutions like national and global brotherhood. They also do not endorse wreaking vengeance on communal agents. They fulfill their social responsibility by stimulating the thoughts of people by narrating to them the tragic after effects of such incidents. The poetic credo of all the three poets can be summed up in the lines, "If you must but above all, act! . . . India is yours! The last word belongs to you" (Nair, 42).

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A Deconstructive Reading of Chandrashekhar B. Kambar's "The Fiend of the Folktales"

Panchali Mukherjee

The originator of "Deconstruction" was the French thinker Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) among whose precursors were Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) and Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) who had questioned the validity of basic philosophical concepts such as "knowledge", "truth" and "identity". Jacques Derrida's paper "Structure Sign and Play of Meaning in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" presented at a symposium at John Hopkins University in 1966 inaugurated a new critical movement in the United States of America. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) was also his predecessor whose theory of psychoanalysis violated the traditional concept of a coherent human consciousness and a unitary self. It designates a theory of reading that claims to subvert or undermine the assumption that the system of language provides grounds that are adequate to establish the boundaries, the coherence or unity, and the determinate meanings of a text (Abrams 225).

Its argument questions the basic metaphysical assumptions of Western Philosophy since Plato. The Structuralist theory presupposes a notion that presumes a centre of meaning. A centre is desired as it guarantees being as presence. Western philosophy has developed innumerable terms which operate as centering principles. It should be noted that any attempt to subvert a concept is to get trapped in the terms which the concept depends upon.The creation of polarization in a system in terms of body/soul, good/bad and serious/unseriousresults in the either pole becoming the centre and guarantor of presence. The desire for a centre is said to be "logocentricism" in Jacques Derrida's *On Grammatology*.

Chandrashekhar B. Kambar's (b. 1934-) "The Fiend of the Folktales" is a poem that is ostensibly based on the idea/ideology of "Primitivism"especially "Chronological Primitivism" foregrounding a dichotomy between tradition/modernity or man/machine represented through the dichotomy between the fiend and the robot. The deconstructive reading of the text suggests that instead of foregrounding the dichotomy between tradition and modernity, or man and machine, it rather postulates

an implicit integration of tradition and modernity, man and machine as essential for progress and survival since it is not possible to survive merely with a glorious tradition alone but in full cognizance of material reality. An amalgamation of the two contrary entities holds the key to a balanced future. Abrams opines:

> A primitivist is someone who prefers what is "natural" (in the sense of that which exists prior to or independently of human culture, reasoning, and contrivance) to what is "artificial" (in the sense of what human beings achieve by thought, activities, laws and conventions, and the complex arrangements of a civilized society).
>
> (169)

In the poem, the fiend is shown to be the symbol of folklore and is known as "Roaring laughter". In an age of technological innovations, the place of folklore is limited suggesting that carefree enjoyment was sought in an earlier era. The celebration, the spirit of entertainment is missing and man's well of creativity and imagination has dried up. The reason is attributed to the benumbing and debilitating effect of technology on man. As a result folklore is out of man's imaginationand the fiend is jobless.The fiend in the poem is a character from the folktale, which is in turn a creation of human culture and is not exactly "natural", that is, existing prior to or independent of human culture. It is a product of human thoughts, activities and the complex arrangements of a civilized society: "The poem is an elegy for the vanishing indigenous cultures with their roots in oral and performative traditions, but also an elegy for man steadily turning into a machine" (*Literary Vistas* 28).The indigenous cultures have actually not disappeared in their entirety but have evolved as hybrid entities with the elements of progress and development added to them. The poem is considered to be based on "Primitivism" not because the fiend is portrayed to be "natural", but because it is based on "Chronological Primitivism".

Chronological primitivism signifies the belief that the ideal era of humanity's way of life lies in the distant past, when men and women lived naturally, simply, and freely, and that the process of history has been a gradual decline from that happy stage into an increasing degree of artifice, complexity, inhibitions, prohibitions, and consequent anxieties and discontents in the psychological, social, and cultural order. In its extreme

form, this ideal era is postulated as having existed in 'the state of nature,' before society and civilization had even begun; more commonly, it is placed at some later stage of development, and sometimes as late as the era of classical Greece. Many, but not all, cultural primitivists are also chronological primitivists (170). The poem espouses the ideology of "Chronological Primitivism" as it talks of an ideal past during which period the fiend's "Roaring laughter" was happy and led an idyllic life. His life is described in the following way:

> Here, under this tree,
> often slept
> the fiend of our folktales.
> Roaring laughter was his name!
> His laughter was not crude or bad, though.
> His story has no beginning, has no ending
> Now he has no likes or dislikes.
> The seven seas have dried up,
> the forests on seven seas are razed
> no mysterious castle or a cage with a parrot,
> not even a handful of berries to devour.
> As no one tells the tale
> the fiend needs no more
> the tremendous makeup or his fiend's costume.
> He need not steal the princess any more.
>
> The fiend
> gets up in the morning
> adorns his horns with jasmine,
> and then
> till the next day, sits quietly
> having nothing in particular to do. (Kambar 29)

The progressive passage of time has rendered the fiend useless in the scheme of things. He has no place in the contemporary times and has been substituted by the bulls and bears of the market or the robot of the scientific and technological world. The poem shows the gradual decline that takes place in the process of history from a happy stage into an increasing degree of artifice which is projected through the gradual decline

of the importance of the fiend and the change in the circumstances due to the growth and development of the civilized society. At the same time, the text implicitly emphasizes on the fact that the fiend has been preserved as a relic of the past and has not been completely eliminated from the scheme of things although it has no place in the contemporary times. This in turn shows the influence of the fiend on the present and the future thereby subtly suggesting the mutual coexistence of the fiend, the bulls and bears of the market and the robot. This aspect projects the need of integration of various contrary trends rather than the annihilation of any one entity or the domination of one over the other.The fiend's state is projected as:

> His story has faded out,
> and that, worries his heart.
> Now he belongs to a different realm
> and we to another province.
> Between the two of us
> Much water has flown in the river
> we can no more make him ever grin.
>
> Bordering on his realm
> sprawls the snaky civilized world.
> The bulls and bears of the market
> take out an endless procession
> headed by useless numskulls.
>
> The robot seems far better than the fiend.
> The fiend can't jump to the skies,
> can't conduct the star wars,
> can't rape the souls,
> can't provoke the perversity. (Kambar 29)

The reading of the text makes a amply clear that in the contemporary times "Primitivism" or "Chronological Primitivism" cannot be upheld as absolute ideologies for advancements in the real relations of production or thought. However, indigenous cultures and their folklore do have their own importance in the scheme of things. It is also a misconception that indigenous cultures are not advanced in the fields of Economics or in Science and Technology. There are well proven and documented evidences

which establish the fact that ancient cultures or civilizations were equally or even more advanced than the ones that are considered to be the most advanced or developed cultures or civilizations. In this context, Abrams writes:

> A historical concept that is antithetic to chronological primitivism emerged in the seventeenth century and reached its height in the nineteenth century. This is the idea of progress: the doctrine that, by virtue of the development and exploitation of art, science and technology, and wisdom, the course of history represents an overall improvement in the life, morality, and happiness of human beings from early barbarity to the present stage of civilization; sometimes it is also claimed that this historical progress of humanity will continue indefinitely – possibly to end in a final stage of social, rational, and moral perfection. (170-171)

In the poem, "Progress" is represented by the bulls and bears of the market as well as the robot who successfully substitute the fiend as they are a product of the contemporary times and have come into existence by virtue of the development and exploitation of economy, art, science and technology and wisdom and help in improving the quality of life, morality and happiness of human beings from early barbarity to the present stage of civilization. An instance can be cited in the case of the robot from the text:

> The robot seems far better than the fiend.
> The fiend can't jump to the skies,
> can't conduct the star wars, (Kambar 29)

Thus, although the poem makes a case for "Chronological Primitivism" but there is an "aporia", an irresolvable internal contradiction or logical disjunctionin the text, when it is mentioned that the robot is stronger than the fiend as it can jump to the skies and can also conduct star wars which the fiend can't. These lines in the poem undermine the foregrounded ideology of "Chronological Primitivism". The next two lines of the same stanza acknowledges that the robot can rape the souls and can provoke the perversity which the fiend can't thereby making the irresolvable internal contradiction or logical disjunction in the text more pronounced.The text does not mention ostensibly that in the contemporary times both the robot

and the fiend are required to maintain growth and progress of the society, culture and nation. It never suggests explicitly that the solution to the problem is to tread the middle path and make both the robot and the fiend coexist harmoniously rather than choosing to make any one entity exist. The danger of making anyone exist, that is, either the fiend or the robot would mean that one has to sacrifice either progress or primitivism although each one has its own merits and demerits. The text ostensibly seems to be critical of indiscriminate progress but ends up subverting its logic as manifested in the logocentric language that is grounded on the "metaphysics of presence" (Abrams 226). Such an instance manifests an attempt to establish an absolute ground in presence and all implicit reliance on such a ground in using language are illusory. The consequence, as Derrida posits "is that we can never, in any instance of speech or writing, have a fixed and decidable present meaning. He says that the differential play (*jeu*) of language does produce the "effects" of decidable meanings in an utterance or text, but asserts that these effects are illusory" (226-227).

In the text, the robot is not only shown to be more powerful but also the product of an alien influence, that is, American influence which is seen to be pro-progress rather than pro-"Chronological Primitivism" as it is a new culture which emphasizes on Economics and Science and Technology for its growth and development.The influence of a foreign culture is seen skeptically as the robot is the outcome of that culture and it is shown to win the battle with the fiend showing that Science and Technology is the route to development thereby undermining the idea of "Chronological Primitivism" which is the manifested idea. The idea of "Progress" in the poem is the non-present meaning which is not present to the readerin its own positive identity.The idea of "Progress" is not strictly absent from the text the manifested idea of "Chronological Primitivism" is the result of a "self-effacing" trace which consists of the non-present idea of "Progress" and its difference from the manifested idea is the sole factor which invests the text with having a meaning in its own right. The text highlights it through this instance:

> The other day, in a story told by the Americans,
> it seems there was a furious battle
> between him and the robot.
> The robot beat the fiend black and blue.
> And the fiend ran away to cover

and hid himself in the folktale.
The folk didn't let him alone.
Dragged him out,
made a beautiful frame,
and displayed him
on the walls of the museum.
Now he looks no more at the robot
or, even at the children.
For,
he says,
the children, after all,
are the off spring of the robot.
Aren't they? (Kambar 29-30)

This example projects the idea of "Progress" implicitly and the idea of "Chronological Primitivism" explicitly as the robot which represents the idea of "Progress" beats the fiend who represents the idea of "Chronological Primitivism" black and blue. It shows that although the text ostensibly foregrounds "Chronological Primitivism" but implicitly suggests that "Progress" has significance in the contemporary times and is fast gaining currency. The plight of the fiend in running for cover, being dragged out and then being framed in a beautiful frame to be displayed on the walls of the museum shows the need for modernity in the contemporary times but the preserving of the fiend as a museum relic shows the significance of tradition. Thus, the implicit idea does not project a dichotomy between man and machine but suggests the harnessing of the potential of the machines by man to benefit mankind. Moreover, it can be done when the past or the tradition can be taken into consideration for reaping the fruits of the present so the fiend is not discarded but maintained as a relic in the museum.

Deconstruction is merely to "situate" or "reinscribe" texts in a system of difference which shows the ultimate self-subversion of the effects to which they owe their seeming intelligibility (Abrams 228). This text situates or reinscribes itself in a system of différance thereby leading to the subversion of the projected idea or ideology of "Chronological Primitivism" which is wary of the mechanized progress and suggests the distant past to be an idyllic period from which the present derives

inspiration. The fact that the fiend has not been completely abandoned and has been preserved as a relic in the museum shows the inspiration that it provides to the present or the contemporary times. Finally, the idea that is projected is that the fiend and the robot should mutually coexist leading to différance or play of ideas by differing and deferring which in turn focusses on the multiplicity of ideas as embodied in the text and does not posit any one idea as the only idea which is to be foregrounded.

Chandrashekhar B. Kambar's "The Fiend of the Folktales" manifests the idea or ideology of "Chronological Primitivism"but a deconstructive reading of the text subverts the manifested idea or ideology leading to the foregrounding of the implicit idea, that is, of "Progress" which has been ostensibly shunned in the text thereby foregrounding the dichotomy between tradition and modernity or man and machine. The idea that is actually upheld although implicitly is the mutual coexistence of the fiend symbolizing tradition and the robot symbolizing modernity or progress as a culture cannot merely survive on its tradition and also needs progress to survive in the fast changing world. The integration of tradition and modernity is foregrounded rather than the dichotomy of tradition and modernity. In this fast paced world, man needs the help of machines to attain progress but at the same time man should not forget the traditional past which forms an integral part of his identity or his sense of belongingness thereby stressing on the need to integrate the polar opposites rather than foregrounding any one of the entities or giving a free way to any one of the entities.

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Claude Chabrol's *Madame Bovary:* An Inflected Re-writing or a Textual Infidelity

Kalplata

Adaptations are inter-textual narratives which give birth to innumerable possibilities in cinematic discourse. Though, it risks essentialism, adaptations are not necessarily a "copy" of its "parent" text. Nor, is it simply a "by-product" of the primary work. It can have its own identity. This paper studies Claude Chabrol's adaptation of a classic novel by Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary,* and tries to find the film's own identity in relation to the novel.

In 1856, a French writer, Gustave Flaubert, wrote a novel titled *Madame Bovary.* This classic novel has been interpreted and re-interpreted in various art forms, film adaptation being one such form of interpretation. Claude Chabrol (1930-2010), a French director adapted this novel into film in 1991. He belonged to the French new wave cinema movement, which started in France in the 1950s with directors such as Francois Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard. Though New wave cinema rejected adaptation of literary work into film, many directors of this period combined literature and cinema. As Robert Stam points out in his article titled "Adaptation and the French New Wave: A Study in Ambivalence" that "Chabrol's 1991 adaptation of *Madame Bovary,* in this sense, represents a kind of return to normalcy and a break with the formal audacity of the New Wave" (189).

In Chabrol's adaptation of *Madame Bovary,* Isabelle Huppert and Jean-François Balmer play the role of Madame and Monsieur Bovary respectively. This adaptation of *Madame Bovary* is so faithful to the original story that there is no mention of the film being "inspired by," "suggested by" or "adapted from" the novel, but rather features the words "*Madame Bovaryde* (of) *Gustave Flaubert*" in its opening sequence. Thus, within the two poles of film adaptation, where complete liberty is taken in the transposition of literature to screen on the one hand, and the film being "truly" adapted from the literary text on the other hand, Chabrol's *Madame Bovary* finds itself in the later position, alongside the "faithfuls" or "reproductions". One can also say that this work is an example of transposition.

The three types of adaptation —transposition, commentary, and analogy — are identified by Geoffrey Wagner in relation to the overlapping

of a film adaptation to the source text (Donaldson-Evans 96). Transposition takes place when there is minimum interference in the process of transferring literary text from page to screen. Commentary alters, restructures and reconstructs the original. Analogy takes fiction as a mere point of departure and is not faithful to the original literary text .

Madame Bovary is the story of Emma and her life after becoming Madame Bovary, her boredom, her adultery and ultimately her death at the end. Flaubert divides his book into three parts. Part one is divided into nine chapters. Part two is divided into fifteen chapters, and part three is divided into eleven chapters.

Though the film ignores Emma's childhood and her husband Charles's journey towards becoming a doctor, it encompasses all the major events of the novel in chronological order. Right from the beginning, the film is the story of Emma. Unlike the novel, where the reader has to wait until the second chapter of the first part to be introduced to Emma, in the film audience gets a glimpse of Emma immediately. The film starts in the early morning, with Doctor Charles Bovary visiting Mr. Rouault at his distant farm to set a simple fracture. Emma is the patient's daughter, admired by Charles and whom he later marries. There is no mention of Heloise, Charles's first wife, and her death in the film. After Heloise's death, Charles and Emma must wait for the mourning period to pass. They spend time with each other to plan the wedding. At this point in the novel, one learns that Emma would like to have a midnight wedding. In the film, however, it is only during the wedding itself that Emma expresses this feeling conveying a sense of boredom to the audience.

The Forgotten "Bovarys"

For Claude Chabrol, *Madame Bovary* is merely the story of Madame Bovary herself, represented as a series of events in her life and her ultimate death. The fact that this novel is rich in visual descriptions does not mean that it is simply about descriptions. Madame Bovary is a *sentimental* character with a lot of nuances. Her character is not built in a vacuum; her void can be understood by understanding the limitations of her surroundings. It becomes therefore necessary to understand her world before understanding Emma and subsequently *Madame Bovary* as a novel. This part of our paper is going to discuss the other forgotten "Bovarys" in Claude Chabrol's 1991 representation of *Madame Bovary.* Flaubert's story begins with Charles at school at the age of fifteen. His father, having spent all of his wife's fortune, has become an ill-tempered and irritable man. It was Charles's mother who had taken care of the house and looked after

business matters. While as a child Charles was pampered by his mother and father, he never developed any bad habits. His mother always kept him near her and wanted him to have a successful career as an engineer, or in Law. It was only after his first communion, at the age of twelve, that he was admitted to school at Rouen, where he was a hard-working student. At the end of his third year, he was admitted to medical school. Here he initially fails, but after tireless hard work, he manages to pass his exams. His parents arrange a grand dinner to celebrate his success, and his mother then starts searching for a place where he could start his practice, and he is finally installed in Tostes. His mother then also looks for a wife for Charles and finds an ugly widow with a handsome income in the hope of making life easier for her son. Flaubert writes:

> She found him one—the widow of a bailiff at Dieppe—who was forty-five and had an income of twelve hundred francs. Though she was ugly, as dry as a bone, her face with as many pimples as the spring has buds, Madame Dubuc had no lack of suitors. To attain her ends Madame Bovary had to oust them all, and she even succeeded in very cleverly baffling the intrigues of a port-butcher backed up by the priests (Kindle Locations 215-219).

Her name was Heloise. She was an unpleasant woman who sought to control Charles's life. One can see that Flaubert is creating a character, Charles, whose life is guided by his mother and his wife. He does not have any judgment of his own, and it seems that he does not feel strongly about anything in life. He does not seem to clearly know what he wants from life, which leads him to easily submit to decisions made by others. In Charles's case, his life decisions are mostly made by strong female characters. Later, he meets and marries Emma, who is a strong character herself, able to take care of the house when her father breaks a leg and he is not able to move from his bed.

The film does not give any insight into Charles Bovary's unsentimental character, which is the cause of Emma's tension after her marriage to him. His voice, his body language, and his shy mannerisms only tell us that he is a timid person. One example of Chabrol's representation of Charles's shyness is shown in the scene where, when he is about to leave after treating Emma's father, she asks him his name, and he answers her with a low voice that his name is "Charbovary." He is barely able to look directly into Emma's eyes. A screenshot of this moment is below.

(*Madame Bovary, Claude Chabrol)*

As one can see, Charles Bovary is about to enter his carriage and is very hesitant in replying to Emma. Chabrol also shows a lack of interest in him for knowing Emma. The reason for Emma's anguish, after becoming Madame Bovary, lies within Charles. Ignoring Charles's character means losing the main plot, that is, the depth of Emma's anguish which is the essence of *Madame Bovary.*

On the other hand, the two shots used to introduce Emma to the audience are not sufficient to present Emma's character in its entirety. In the first shot, which is a close-up of her, the audience gets to see Emma. Here, she is shown as a somber character with a faint smile. This picture does not give the audience any clue as to the enthusiastic side to Emma's character.

(*Madame Bovary, Claude Chabrol)*

The second shot which aims to describe Emma's character to the audience does not succeed in presenting the "emotional" Emma, telling us only about her artistic inclinations and her desire to live in a town. Again, Emma's gestures and voice do not effectively portray Flaubert's Emma. The expressions of Flaubert's Emma are more complex, her voice modulations change as she manifests her joy and boredom. At one moment her "big naïve eyes" are open and immediately after her eyelids are half closed. Flaubert depicts the complex emotions of Emma in the following words:

> And, according to what she was saying, her voice was clear, sharp, or, on a sudden all languor, drawn out in modulations that ended almost in murmurs as she spoke to herself, now joyous, opening big naive eyes, then with her eyelids half closed, her look full of boredom, her thoughts wandering. (Flaubert, Kindle Locations 412-414).

In this scene in the film, Emma is describing her passion for music, the prizes she won at the convent, her mother, and how she would like to live in a town. In the same scene, Charles is paying very little attention to what she is saying as he is looking at her beauty and is busy making plans to marry her. The two characters are on two completely different levels of thought. Though the mismatch between these two characters can be seen in this scene, it fails to define their contrasting characters to the audience. The audience, even after this scene, remains unaware of these two characters' personalities and thus falls prey to simplistic binary divisions, such as:

a . Emma is beautiful/ Charles is not very good-looking
b . Emma is bold/ Charles is shy
c . Emma likes art/ Charles does not like art

These binary divisions in the audience's mind lead to a further misunderstanding of Emma's character. It becomes easy to draw the simplistic conclusion that Emma does not like Charles simply because he does not possess the above qualities, rather than because of their difference in temperament.

Again, her entire romantic character is condensed in her monologue about how she would have liked a midnight wedding.

The "Uneasiness" of Madame Bovary

The lines below from chapter six, part one of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, make it very clear that Emma has nothing in common with Charles Bovary. She is already "bored" by the calm countryside life he offers, and all she wants is a life of excitement. The sea excites because of its storms. The green fields attract her only when they are broken by ruins. She is not looking for landscapes, but for the ability to create emotion in her heart. It is important to note here that the sea, which Flaubert writes about, is mostly absent in Chabrol's work:

> Accustomed to calm aspects of life, she turned, on the contrary, to those of excitement. She loved the sea only for the sake of its storms, and the green fields only when broken up by ruins. She wanted to get some personal profit out of things, and she rejected as useless all that did not contribute to the immediate desires of her heart, being of a temperament more sentimental than artistic, looking for emotions, not landscapes. (630-634)

Emma does not like mediocrity in sentiments. When her mother dies, she writes a letter full of her melancholic reflections on life to her father, who immediately goes to see her thinking that she is sick. She appreciates the fact that she can move her father and enjoys her success in reaching idealism in a pale life. Flaubert describes Emma's self-appeasement, even in

moments of sorrow, in these words:

> The goodman [Mr. Roualt, Emma's father] thought she must be ill and came to see her. Emma was secretly pleased that she had reached at a first attempt the rare ideal of pale lives, never attained by mediocre hearts. (670-671)

Flaubert creates the *uneasiness* which falls upon Emma's life after her marriage with these words.

> As their life together became more intimate, a growing detachment distanced her from him. Charles's conversation was as flat as a pavement. His borrowed ideas trudged past in colourless procession without emotion, laughter or dreams. (145)

Chabrol uses the exact words as a background narration to portray Madame Bovary's *uneasiness* after her marriage. While the narrator speaks in the background, one sees Charles and Emma having dinner together and having a trivial conversation about the weather. Emma's facial expression and her monotonous voice clearly express her total lack of interest. Through his use of background narration, Chabrol tries to compensate for the visual limitations he encounters in trying to capture Emma's inner unease on screen.

(*Madame Bovary, Claude Chabrol)*

This scene is insufficient in translating Emma's desperate attempt to express herself and Charles's emotional absence in her life brought about by his inability to understand her. The scene also fails to capture Emma's desire to include her husband in her sentimental life. Charles, on the other hand,

could never guess his wife's "undefinable uneasiness, variable as the clouds, unstable as the winds". She expects passion and refinement from him, but all of Charles's conversations fail to evoke any "emotion, laughter or thought" in Emma, nor does he have any curiosity in art. (700)

In the book, Emma expresses her dissatisfaction with regards to Charles's calm ease with the following words:

> A man, on the contrary, should he not know everything, excel in manifold activities, initiate you into the energies of passion, the refinements of life, all mysteries? But this one taught nothing, knew nothing, wished nothing. He thought her happy; and she resented this easy calm, this serene heaviness, the very happiness she gave him. (708-710)

Chabrol fails to present the silence in Emma's life, her silent anguish, and to portray Charles's happiness at having a wife like Emma. He takes pride in Emma's artistic skills and, unlike Emma, is never short of words to share his daily routine at dinner time. Also, Chabrol completely ignores the tension between Charles's mother, Madame Dubuc, and Emma. Again, this tension between the two women highlights his indecisive nature whereby he is not sure whom to support and whom to criticize.Flaubert explains Charles's dilemma in front of her mother and his wife in these words:

> Charles knew not what to answer: he respected his mother, and he loved his wife infinitely; he considered the judgment of the one infallible, and yet he thought the conduct of the other irreproachable. (741-742).

Finally, Emma accepts the fact that Charles's expression of passion is inhibited. Even his expression of love can be easily predicted:

> His outbursts became regular; he embraced her at certain fixed times. It was one habit among other habits, and, like a dessert, looked forward to after the monotony of dinner. (749-751)

"Why did I Marry?"

This part of our paper is going to take Chabrol's representation of Emma's question "why did I marry?"

Unlike Flaubert, Chabrol does not make a clear distinction between Emma's uneasiness and her "ennui," which overlap in Chabrol's work. Chabrol's Emma quickly reaches a stage of boredom, whereas Flaubert's Emma passes through the phase of uneasiness and then reaches the stage of boredom. As opposed to Chabrol's Emma, Flaubert's asks the question "why did I marry?" after many attempts to adjust to life with Charles. She

thinks about changes which she wants to bring about in the house; she has new wallpaper put up and repaints the staircase. She wants to fall in love with Charles, but all her attempts to make Charles more amorous fail. She is as vulnerable as the sea, and he is as calm as land (or island) without any sign of "movement."

This is the first scene after Emma's marriage where she steps outside the house to say goodbye to Charles and is very disappointed not to see anything exciting in her surroundings.

(*Madame Bovary, Claude Chabrol)*

This is the second scene where she goes inside and becomes absorbed in the music.

(*Madame Bovary, Claude Chabrol)*

This is the scene where she tries to pass the time walking.

(*Madame Bovary, Claude Chabrol)*

Very soon, she starts questioning why she got married.

Flaubert's Emma is not that impatient. She manages her house and makes food for her neighbours. She spends hours alone, walking with her Italian greyhound. She goes to the beeches of Bannerville. She looks around but cannot see any change and then she asks the question "Good heavens! Why did I marry?" and imagines the life she would have led if she had a different husband, someone "handsome, witty, distinguished, attractive" (763).

She often imagines the life of her companions at the convent.

> In town, with the noise of the streets, the buzz of the theatres and the lights of the ballroom, they were living lives where the heart expands, the senses bourgeon out. (764-765)

Returning to her life, she finds herself trapped in the web of *ennui* which was "weaving in the darkness in every corner of her heart". The *ennui*, the "silent spider" (765-767)in Emma's life is almost blurred in Chabrol's work. Also, her comparison to her dog Djali and her conversation.

Conclusion

Chabrol simplifies and summarises *Madame Bovary*, not only the novel but also the character of Emma herself. This adaptation of *Madame Bovary* fails to tell us that Emma is the victim of marriage with an unsuitable man, a story of mismatching. Madame Bovary is criticized, as the reader does not want to believe the words of a woman. The representation of Madame Bovary's boredom after her marriage becomes the tale of a married woman's woes and her adultery. She is the victim of a father who loves to spend money on a "good life" rather than saving for a good dowry for his daughter. Old Rouault, her father, wants to get rid of his daughter, who "was of no use to him in the house" and he immediately seizes the opportunity to marry her off to Charles, without respecting her wishes.

Adapting *Madame Bovary* is a difficult task as, an adaptation, as pointed out by André Bazin, in his famous work titled *What is Cinema?* "derives from a form of literature so highly developed that the heroes and the meaning of their actions depend very closely on the style of the author, when they are intimately wrapped up with it as in a microcosm, the laws of which, in themselves rigorously determined, have no validity outside that world (…)" (54).

As quoted in in the book *French film directors: Claude Chabrol*Hupert says that "C'est de cela que meurt Madame Bovary: de ne pas avoirétére connue commeune personne desirante" (That's what Madame Bovary dies of – not being recognised as a person with desires" (Austin 145).

Should one really criticize the adaptation of *Madame Bovary* for its inability to capture Emma's "pain". After all, according to Bazin, "the accelerated evolution (of cinema) is in no sense contemporary with that of the other arts. The cinema is young, but literature, theatre, and music are as old as history" (55).

On the question of adaptation being inferior to novels André Bazin insists that "the fact that the cinema appeared after the novel and the theatre

does not mean that it fails into line behind them and on the same plane" (57). While pointing out the difference between the film and the novel, one should take into account, as Robert Stam mentions in the chapter "Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation" in the book titled *Film Adaptation* edited by James Naremore, that one sees the difference in adaptation from the novel because there is a change of medium. As Stam explains subsequently, novel has words and a film has images and sounds. For example, when in *Madame Bovary*, Flaubert details the physical characteristics of Emma, it leads to various imaginative constructions in reader's mind. On the contrary, a film, must narrow down to a specific performer, for example, Isabelle Hubert, who is "real" and "concrete". Thus, by making a choice of characters, by omitting certain aspects of Emma and by giving more emphasis on her life rather than other characters in the novel, Chabrol makes the choice to re-write the novel in his own way. This act of re-writing gives a distinct identity to this adaptation of *Madame Bovary.* In the end we can say that, Chabrol's *Madame* Bovary is original because of its *infidelity* to the original text.

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Wrestling, In and Out: Revisiting *Things Fall Apart*

Parvinder

The present paper is an attempt to extend the canvas of Chinua Achebe's magnum opus *Things Fall Apart* beyond the usual investigations into politics, religion, morality and colonialism. It highlights how the sport of wrestling influences the dynamics of things falling apart in the Igbo society. Roland Barthes asserts that wrestling is "a sort of diacritical writing" that "always welcome[s] explanations, constantly aiding the reading of the combat by certain gestures, certain attitudes, certain mimicries which afford the intention its utmost meaning" (6). In the context of the novel, the sport is not an accidental reference or a decorative device. As a metaphor, it runs through the text in terms of action, diction and a symbolic combat between the Igbo people and the British. The cult(s) of community and masculinity, stereotypically associated with the ancient sport, nourish the ideological background of the story.[1] A nuanced reading of wrestling's grammar unfolds the mysteries behind the course of action undertaken by Okonkwo, the protagonist of the novel.

Wrestling and the Cult of Community

The Igbo people form an agrarian society. Their social codes – family rituals and religious beliefs, marriage customs and organized feasts, food production and preparation processes – find correspondence with the agriculture activities. Wrestling is linked to the agrarian cycle, "usually being held as part of post-harvest festivities" (Bromber et al. 395). The villagers of Umuofia celebrate the second day of their New Yam (crop) Festival with a wrestling match against the neighbouring village. The novel begins with the account of a combat between Okonkwo and Amalinze the Cat, a great wrestler who was unbeaten for seven years:

> The drums beat and the flutes sang and the spectators held their breath. Amalinze was a wily craftsman, but Okonkwo was as slippery as a fish in the water. Every nerve and every muscle stood out on their arms, on their backs and their thighs, and one also heard them stretching to breaking point. In the end Okonkwo threw the Cat. (Achebe 3)

The description establishes the primary identity of the protagonist as a wrestler who eventually throws the Cat to become "one of the lords of the clan" (Achebe 19). Wrestling here not merely caters to individual success but also represents the prowess of a community. The image of wrestlers, with the muscles 'stood out on their arms', embodies the "masculine ethnic pride" (Carotenuto 1892). Okonkwo's act of throwing the Cat is not a personal achievement; rather his accomplishment translates into the supremacy of his clan over the neighbouring tribes. Consequently, following a dispute, when Okonkwo is sent to the village of Mbaino as an emissary of war, he returns home with a virgin and a young boy namely Ikemefuna, as rewards of a peaceful settlement.

In the beginning, far from being a mere sport, wrestling appears to be a way of life for the Igbo people: "The whole village turned out on the *ilo* (playground), men, women and children. They stood round in a huge circle leaving the centre of the playground free. The elders and grandees of the village sat on their own stools . . . Okonkwo was among them" (Achebe 33). This image of the wrestling playground displays the communitarian aspects of the sport in more than one way. Firstly, the participation of 'men, women and children' as spectators suggests the stakes of the 'whole village' in the event. Beating of the drums in the playground "was no longer a separate thing from the living village. It was like the pulsation of its heart" (31). Secondly, this is an image of a traditional playground where the spectators are not segregated/'othered' from the players with the fenced ropes. The villagers, making 'a huge circle' around the wrestlers, "roared and clapped" and sang the songs of praise to become one with the spectacle. Moreover, the presence of 'elders and grandees' communicates an age old tradition of wrestling events preserved through community festivals. (34)

Among the many 'things' that eventually 'fall apart' is also the idea of wrestling as a community sport. In the first part of novel, the recurrent wrestling events symbolize the presence of a 'community'. In the sections that follow, there is no reference to a wrestling match being played, and the absence of wrestling signifies the degeneration of community standards. As a social practice, the sport implies "continuity with a real or imagined

past and [is] usually associated with widely accepted rituals or other forms of symbolic behavior" (qtd. in Bromber et al 392). The continuum with past is threatened due to the arrival of the British in the village. The idea of wrestling as a community sport, hereafter, becomes a mere nostalgia as Okonkwo "mourned for the warlike men of Umoufia, who had so unaccountably become soft like women" (Achebe 129). Nevertheless, having cultivated the behavioural norms from the sport, Okonkwo decides to grapple with the Empire. As he declares, "I shall fight alone if I choose", wrestling turns out to be an individual endeavour (142). With the demise of actual combat, it takes place in the form of Okonkwo's actions.

Of Wrestling and (Not) Thinking

John Zilcosky, in his article subtitled "Of Wrestling and (Not) Thinking", avers that a wrestler is known for his spontaneous actions and non-thinking temperament (18). Okonkwo is a by-product of what wrestling has made of him. The narrator overtly informs that the protagonist is "not a man of thought but of action" (Achebe 48). Despite his being a representative figure, his actions exemplify a defiance of rationality. In the name of the clan's sacred order, he brutally kills Ikemefuna with his own machete after nourishing him for three years like his own son. Okonkwo's instinctive act exposes his inability to ponder over and reveals his hidebound disposition. He undoubtedly broods over Ikemefuna's death but makes no attempt to question his inhuman act:

> Okonkwo did not taste any food for two days after the death of Ikemefuna. He drank palm-wine from morning till night, and his eyes were red and fierce like the eyes of a rat when it was caught by the tail and dashed against the floor … He did not sleep at night. He tried not to think about Ikemefuna, but the more he tried the more he thought about him. (44)

The image of a rat 'dashed against the floor' presents Okonwko as a defeated wrestler who by trying 'not to think' attempts to evade even an afterthought to his defeat. As memories of Ikemefuna still keep haunting him, he fancies "[i]f only he could find some work to do" (45). When Obierika, his closest friend, condemns Okonkwo for his heinous act and warns him of the possible consequences, he justifies himself asserting: "The Earth cannot punish me for

obeying her messenger" (47). His cognitive instability reflects not only in his action but also in the justification of his act. Okonkwo claims to be a champion of the clan's divine rules forgetting that he flouted the same sacred norms by beating his wife during the week of peace. Roland Barthes opines that a wrestler is a man "outside the rules" who "acknowledges the rules only when they are of use to him . . . He takes refuge behind the Law when he supposes it favors him and betrays it when it seems useful to do so" (13).

Maneuvering religious sanction as a hideout for his bestiality, the wrestler attributes the sport with communal violence. Okonkwo's defense risks wrestling into being a fundamentalist or barbarous exercise. Fundamentalism is generally understood as an unwavering belief system beyond reason. The fundamentalist streak in the protagonist transgresses beyond a strict adherence to a religious order for he considers even manliness akin to religiosity. Confusing masculinity with aggression and violence, the non-thinking protagonist appropriates wrestling into a "militant discourse" (Alter 559).[2] Having been attacked by a clansman, Ikemefuna runs for protection towards Okonkwo who "drew his matchet and cut him down" for he "was afraid of being thought weak" (Achebe 43). In a similar manner, he murders the head-messenger sent by the District Commissioner to stop the meeting of the Clansmen. For an extremist, the body of a wrestler is "a phalanx to ward off penetration and erosion from the outside" (Alter 577).[3] Okonkwo reckons Ikemefuna and the head-messenger as agents from the 'outside' who seem to test the potency of the clan's masculine pride with their unwanted presence on the land of Umuofia. Consequently, he eliminates them. Wrestling as a form of play is "uneasily situated on the margin between sport (ordered and rule-bound) and uncontrolled violence" (Marshall 267). The protagonist blindly succumbs to mistaken masculinity which eventually leads him to overlook this significant distinction.

The idea of a wrestling body, warding off threats from the outside, associates the sport with somatic nationalism.[4] Wrestling is perceived as "an affair of bodies and not words" (Marshall 276). The readers are told at the outset that Okonkwo "was not a man of many words" (Achebe 77), he

would rather "use his fists" (3). Moreover, he is said to conduct his household with "a heavy hand" (9). His machete, the weapon he uses for killing Ikemefuna and the head-messenger, perceptibly appears as an extension of his arm. The killing of Ikemefuna is followed by a 'silence' as neither Okonkwo nor his fellow clansmen utter a word. When Okonkwo beheads the head-messenger, the villagers however mutter, "Why did he do it?", but the protagonist simply "wiped his matchet on the sand and went away" (145). In all these instances, either the body speaks or the silence pervades. The suppression of words in wrestling is perceived as "draining of interiority in favor of external signs" or the "exhaustion of content by form" (Barthes 7).

Okonkwo relies on 'external signs' or the physical 'form' to convey his message. His decision to eliminate himself, so as not to face the humiliation of living under the British rule, is not voiced out verbally. He rather hangs himself as an 'external sign' to exhibit his disapproval of the foreign existence on their land. The British contrarily thrives on 'content' to establish their rule in the Umuofia. The missionaries persuade the fluctuating minds with the power of preaching and convert them to Christianity. Okonkwo's own son, Nwoye is bent towards the captivating potential of words: "He felt a relief within as the hymn poured into his parched soul. The words of the hymn were like the drops of frozen rain melting on the dry plate of the panting earth" (Achebe 104). The reliance on 'content' continues to be the sole strategy of the British authorities even when the protesting villagers burn their church. Following the blasphemic act, the District Commissioner sends "his sweet-tongued messenger" to convince the leaders of the clan for a dialogue (Achebe 136). Furthermore, the authorities choose five court messengers over armed troop to interrupt the meeting of the clansmen. The frequent communication through the messengers exhibits their intent to exchange the words. The British thus employ the verbal 'content' as a counter pull to overshadow Okonkwo's obsession with 'the body'.

The clash between the Igbo society and the British is symbolic of the interface between two different sporting ideologies. Wrestling as a sport of agrarian Igbo class is a complete antithesis of cricket as its British counterpart. When Mr. Brown realizes that a frontal attack on the clan would not succeed, he decides to build a school in Umuofia for he understands that "religion and

education went hand in hand" (128). However, there is no direct reference to the sport of cricket in the novel, but the establishment of school signifies a lateral existence of cricket. Cricket is an offshoot of the British public school culture and the sport serves as a medium of education. This puritan sport was hegemonically used to make people conformist in England and its colonies by propagating 'fairplay' and gentleman spirit through it (James 34-35). The ideology of wrestling conversely espouses "foul play" since "[e]vil is wrestling's natural climate" (Barthes 11). The Igbo society plays 'foul' with the effeminate, outcasts and titleless men who are excluded from the clan's traditional activities. Consequently, among the villagers who convert to Christianity "were mostly the kind of people that were called *efulefu*, worthless, empty men" (Achebe 101). As the cricket-playing nation's authorities treat them 'fairly', they become the strength of the Church.

Wrestling's Algebra

Roland Barthes professes that the game of wrestling is a spectacle in which a "wrestler's function is not to win but to perform exactly the gestures expected of him" (4). Being a public man, a wrestler is entrapped in "the obviousness of the roles" (5). Okonkwo, as a representative of the Igbo society, is a victim of the same community expectations. The death of a boy who calls him 'father' is a personal loss to him; nonetheless, the cult of heroic associated with the sport disguises the personal tragedy into a public responsibility. Okonkwo's juxtaposed emotions consolidate the subtlety of such a situation:

> 'When did you become a shivering old woman,' Okonkwo asked himself, 'you are known in all the nine villages for your valour in war. How can a man who has killed five men in battle fall to pieces because he has added a boy to their number? Okonkwo you have become a woman indeed.'
>
> He sprang to his feet, hung his goatskin bag on his shoulder and went to visit his friend, Obierika. (Achebe 45)

The description catalogues contrary emotions and displays a conflict between the "private self" and "the public man" (Nnoromele 155). On the one hand, Okonkwo feels like a 'shivering old woman', and at the same time, he contemplates his 'valour in war'. At one point, he seems to be falling 'to pieces'

because of Ikemefuna's demise, and suddenly, he is just another 'boy' for him. In this battle between the personal loss and the public responsibility, the wrestler delivers the wonted expectations. As he 'sprang to his feet' to begin his mundane life once again, the community hero suppresses the father within him.

Things Fall Apart embodies Okonkwo's continuous grapple with the events happening in his life. Each moment of this combat is "a kind of algebra which instantaneously discloses the relation of cause with its figured effect" (Barthes 7). Ikemefuna's murder results in the rebellion of Okonkwo's biological son, Nwoye. He questions the 'foul play' of his clan when he "heard that twins were put in earthenware pots and thrown away in the forest" (Achebe 43). Nwoye and Ikemefuna grew up like twins, sharing food and work with each other and listening to the stories of tribal wars from their father. The killing of Ikemefuna consolidates his rebellion against the ethos of his clan, and eventually, he converts to Christianity. Okonkwo chokes him by his neck but 'the falcon cannot hear the falconer' and, hence, the 'things fall apart'. The sport of wrestling is based on "a quantitative series of compensations (an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth)" (10). The act of dissidence by Nwoye thus is a "mathematical justification" to Okonkwo's own defiance against his father, Unoka (13).

The inroads to misfortune can be anticipated from the way Okonkwo walks. His body language acutely exemplifies the destructive force in him. In the very beginning, the readers are told: "When he walked, his feet hardly touched the ground and he seemed to walk on springs, as if he was going to pounce on somebody" (Achebe 3). The description presents the typical gait of a wrestler. The word 'pounce' calls for attention since it is stereotypically associated with the world of combat. In wrestling, the winner emerges out of his capacity to remain on top avoiding his contact with the earth. Similarly, Okonkwo's feet, hardly touching the ground, purport "defiance of gravity" or "a denial of the earth" (McDougall 13). Moreover, a walk is also symbolic of one's tryst with the future. A semiotic understanding of a wrestler's physique suggests that like the characters of Commedia dell'Arte, wrestlers "display in advance, in their costumes and postures, the future contents of their role" (Barthes 6). Defying the attraction of the earth, Okonkwo's walk scripts his future and in the end he could be seen dangling on a tree.

In a wrestling match, the "Exhibition of Suffering" is "the very finality of the fight" (Barthes 8). Okonkwo's dangling body thus is an image out on the display. The method he adopts for suicide corresponds to the world of wrestling. The rope on his neck invokes the spectacular image of a 'hold' in the sport. Since Okonkwo does not seek his adversary's hold on his neck, he hangs himself. His decision to publically exhibit his agony conveys that, like a true wrestler, he is not ashamed of his suffering (5). Unlike other sports, the defeat in wrestling "is not a conventional sign, abandoned once it is achieved: it is not a way out, but quite the contrary a duration, a showing forth, it resumes the oldest myths of public Suffering and Humiliation: the cross and the pillory" (9-10). Okonkwo's defeat culminating in his suicide conforms to 'the oldest myths' of suffering in more than one way. His suicide is against the custom of the land and his body can "not be buried by his clansmen" (Achebe 147). What is all the more humiliating is the fact that he would be redeemed by the "strangers", and that too, the British who "drove him to kill himself" (147). Okonkwo's suffering resumes further as the District Commissioner decides to write a "reasonable paragraph" on him in his upcoming book on the primitive subjects (148). The protagonist's defeat thus is not 'a way out' for even after his death he is 'no longer at ease'.[5]

Conclusion

The spectacle of wrestling provides alternative insights to the understanding of the novel. Seeking constant explanations, the sport subverts the previously established meaning(s) of the novel and aids the story with a fresh layer of signification. It serves as an epistemological source that allows an extensive comprehension of the unified social mechanism maintained by the Igbo people before the arrival of the British. The cult-generating game lends the text its ideological substance and the narrative reciprocates by tracing the history of wrestling from its ritualistic prime to its becoming a residual form of culture. What enables the ancient sport to have a dialogue with the canonicity of the text is its historical relation with religion, ethics and politics. As a result, any reflection on the sport's mythology turns out to be a simultaneous examination of these grand narratives. Feeding the aesthetic core of the narrative, wrestling emerges out to be a link between the novel's diverse sources.

Endnotes

1 The sport of wrestling is frequently mentioned in Greek art, literature and mythology. In Greek and Roman literature, the evidence of wrestling is more abundant and more varied than any other sport. Prominent writers like Ovid, Homer and Pindar describe the wrestling scenes involving the powerful men of their times in concrete details (Gardiner 14).

2 The bodily nationalism of wrestling is essentially non-sectarian. Nonetheless, some fundamentalist groups overlay ideology with athletics. For example, some fundamentalist groups in India used *akharas* (wrestling gymnasia) to rally their recruits (Alter 559). Similarly, in the Soviet Union, the ruling Communist party exploited the "symbolism of wrestling (struggle, strength, masculinity, determination, and courage) to convey ideological messages" (Bromber et al. 393).

3 For example, Hindu fundamentalists in India consider two elements of a Hindu's consciousness i.e. *sanskriti* and *dharma* as "immutable and transcendent" (Alter 577). According to them, these ideals are constantly threatened either by some foreign influence or by the very idea of secularism. Therefore, the body of a volunteer is trained with drills and physical fitness exercises in order to protect these ideals (577).

4 Follow endnote 3.

5 *No Longer at Ease* is the second novel of the African trilogy written by Chinua Achebe. It is generally considered as a sequel to *Things Fall Apart.* The third novel in the series is *Arrow of God.*

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The Documentary as a Tool of Protest: Studying the Documentary *Jahan Chinti Ladi Hathi Se* (1998) as a Case of Protest against Bauxite Mining in Mahuadand, Jharkhand

Shabnam Parveen

How something gets said matters as much as what gets said (Nichols). Documentary is one such form, which, apart from being a mere art-form is also seen as a form of protest or a tool to bring in to the forefront, the question of social justice. This is what this paper unfolds, and shows how it worked in the cause of the people of Jharkhand, and hence the Jharkhand movement.

To talk of Jharkhand, in the late twentieth century, the demand for autonomy of the state moved from the hands of the people and went into the hands of the various national/ regional/ old and newly formed political parties. The movement was partly a success and partly a failure, it still continued, sometimes subtle and sometimes in stronger forms. Amid all this hullabaloo of the left, right and centre; and the good, bad and ugly, which is an obvious outcome of any political turmoil, specially of the conflict areas of South Asia. Two documentary filmmakers in the region – Meghnath and Biju Toppo, took upon themselves to do "…Something for the people of their region." As Meghnath puts it, "the people who were always a part of them, who suffered without faults, and who kept on struggling for their rights, at least to be alive".[1] In the 90s it was, that, while contemplating on the issues of development of the region, especially the Adivasi belt, some youth of this region decided to do something for the people; this was a revolution, certainly, but on the intellectual front- in the form of non-violence. And, thus they began with a group named *Akhra*[2]. This body with a group of committed people, most of them locals, exists; working not only in the field of culture and communication but alsofor the issues of human rights, especially of the indigenous people of Jharkhand, in particular, as well as that of other parts of India. Biju Toppo, one of the first few filmmakers from the tribal community to make films on his people to "…Counter the misrepresentation of his people in the mainstream

media", as their pamphlet declares; apart from being involved in film-making, teaches in the Department of Mass Communication of St. Xavier's College, Ranchi. Meghnath, whose father was an industrialist in Mumbai, and who has spent a good number of days outside Jharkhand, in Calcutta as well as in Mumbai to study and to work, came to Jharkhand in 1981 because he was tired of what everyone else did, of the life he had been offered to so far. He wanted to do something for the region, for the suffering people whom he saw, and thus began his journey of activism, which he has been doing for the last thirty years in Jharkhand, for its people as well as for tribals all over India. He is with the people, against destructive development and voices the struggle of people who remain unheard. Apart from being an activist and a filmmaker, he too like Biju, taught in the Department of Mass Communicaton of St. Xavier's College, Ranchi. To speak of activism is fine, to do it is good, but to do it for an actual cause is indeed remarkable. Jharkhand, which got carved out of Bihar in 2000, till then too wasreported to be "…Plagued by adverse initial conditions- low average income, very high the incidence of poverty, and little social development…" (*Jharkhand* 1).

The 55th NSS (National Sample Survey) round in 1999-2000 also marked the region to be the lowest (49th) in all over India in terms of rural poverty. With regards to initial health and education indicators too, Jharkhand fared worse than the all-India average. And, even with the improvement in the rate of access to primary education as well as key health indicators in terms of child vaccination, till date it remains a state with the highest rate of poverty in India. The implementation of programs is reported to have increased after its separation from Bihar, but the region still faces difficulty with the growing weaknesses in the implementation capacity of policies (*Jharkhand* 3).

Meghnath and Toppo while working on the various facets of sufferings and exploitation as well as the various effects of destructive development on the regional people collaborated on a collection of documentaries, which apart from being their creative expressions are a tell-tale of the many horrific truths that humans do to humans, and a voicing of the most beauteous of truths, seldom shown or spoken.

They began their journeys of the hidden narratives with *Shaheed Jo Anjan Rahe* or *Unknown Martyrs* in 1996- a movie about the 'brutal massacre of the indigenous people' along with the murder of Fr. Anthony Murmu, an ex-parliamentarian and 13 others who were killed in Banjhi, Sahibganj district of Jharkhand. In 1997, they moved on to their next project called *Ek Hadsa Aur Bhi (Yet Another Accident),* which focused on the destruction that development causes, as was the case inthe dam-disaster in 1997 in Palamu district of Jharkhand, which cost 19 lives, apart from the destruction caused to the land and property. The duo went ahead in 1998 with *Jahan Chiti Ladi Hathi Se (Where Ants are Fighting Elephants)* – a story of the struggle of the people against bauxite mining. In 2000, they came up with *Hamare Gaon me Hamara Raj* (Tribal Self Rule), which deals with the Gram Sabha Movement. Next came, *Vikas Bandook ki Naal se* (*Development flows from the Barrel of the Gun*) in 2003, which again talks of how development like a sweet poison loves to play with the violation of human rights. In 2004, they brought forth *From Kalinga to Kashipur* – about people's struggle against an aluminum factory in Kashipur (Koraput), Odisha. Later in 2005 came *Kora Rajee* (The Land of the Diggers) – this was the first film to be made in a tribal language called Kurukh, which talks of the toil, till and torture of the Adivasi labourers in the tea gardens of Assam and Bengal.

In May 2007, they came up with *Khorar Desher Joler Kotha (Story of Water from the Land of Drought*), which highlights water preservation in Purulia district of West Bengal, which is a drought-prone area. In May 2007 came *Power for Change*, which talks of alternative development model in rural Orissa especially the use of Micro-hydal power- a project packed with positive, constructive and sustainable development. In 2009, they concieved yet another social concern based documentary titled *100 Din Milega Kaam (100 Days of Work for You*) – which uncovers the ground reality of the works covered by the NREGA act in the villages. In the film *Loha Garam Hai (Iron is Hot),* which released in 2010, foregrounds pollution caused by the sponge iron industry and how people coped with it. The documentary named *Gadi Lohardaga Mail*, produced in 2010, is the only film which is not a part of his issue-based documentaries but rather a nostalgic tell-tale of the local Lohardaga Mail. The film is interspersed with songs in the Nagpuri language. The

documentary *Ek Ropa Dhan (A Handful of Paddy)* (2010), talks of SRI methods of rice cultivation, which shows how rice cultivation can be improved by changing the method of cultivation. The filmmakers consider it to be a form of positive development. In *Mukta Gyan Kutir* (2010), the details study regarding alternative education for tribal girls who dropped out of regular schools, is presented. The 2011 documentary *Sona Gahi Pinjra (The Golden Cage*) paints the plight of people living away from home during festivals; it also talks about how mobile phones make it convenient for them to connect with people back home, and can be a sign of positive development for people. *Taking Side*, a documentary which came out in 2015, depicts the life of Sister Valsa John who was born in Kerala but worked for the Adivasis of Jharkhand. She stood against illegal and exploitative coal mining and even sacrificed her life for it.

The film *Jahan Chinti Ladi Hathi Se* is the focal point of study; it is dedicated to Junus Lakda. This film is based on bauxite mining that was done by the Birla Company in various parts of the state of Jharkhand, focusing especially in the areas of Lohardaga and Palamu, and also deals with minor shots of other affected areas of 'development', as the state calls. Any feature film apart from being a tool of cultural expression, also has the potential to be a tool of political expression (Gils, Shwaith 443). Documentary, as a form of art and culture already fits into the category of resistance; owing to its nature of being a realistic representation, or rather a realistic depiction of events, albeit a non-violent resistance. This 'Intifada' onscreen, however, on being performed as well as being recorded is an act of resistance as it does not only provide an insight into the people's struggle and sufferings but also of that of the filmmakers, for later in a scene we see the police prohibiting the shoot. The filmmakers have to give in and stop, and some of them even get jailed. However, the villagers come in camaraderie; just like the filmmakers were in communion with them and the police have to give in. The filmmakers get released ultimately and the shooting starts.

This event was a verifiable act of resistance on the entire crew, against corporate as well as state suppression. The film has various scenes where the "state/corporate versus people" conversations are shot, which are anti to each other. Being a documentary all the actors are real-life people. The film captures some people out of which three were women, who complain of how they were getting deprived of their land. A data says almost sixty percent tribals and 30

percent Dalits are the ones who had to give up their land for developmental plans, however, only 25 percent have been rehabilitated till now. Nobody knows what happened to the rest, perhaps migration or worst still displaced forever, without any permanent settlement of their own. Adivasis have depended on land since ever. From economy to culture, their livelihood, to their festivals like Sarna or Sarhul, are all land-based, which they consider to be a gift from their ancestors.

Still, the Adivasi continues to suffer while fighting for it. Apart from the omnipresent narrator, the movie is interspersed with real-life interviews of the villagers. There is aprominent part in the film where one of the villagers questions "… if development meant development of the state and the privileged population….and degradation of the Adivasis?!…" The documentary also employs dramatic irony, where once the state officials are questioned by the filmmakers about a certain issue, and immediately after, the villagers and the local population are questioned about the same topic showcasing contrary viewpoints. Effortlessly, the filmmakers present the perspective by juxtaposing the opinions of the public with the officials, without putting forth their subjective viewpoints, and thus are able to bring forth the reality as it exists. The villagers were able to put forth their viewpoints as per their experiences. Their words expressed the truth. The people while being interrogated, were more than open while speaking their heart out. A JCB machine marked L&T FOCALIN is shown to lift some earth without measurement like a machine would do; while the bauxite mining was in process. Some labourers (for this particular mine being shot in the film, it were 16 men) were shown working in the field. There were sound and sight of huge machines. Occasionally, shots of blasts were captured which broke open the soil and got blown far off. The shot shows the people who were working in these conditions as normalized as possible. After all it was a daily occurrence. And, no matter what, for the capitalists, should not the show just go on? The camera merges sound and voiceovers with scenes and landscapes getting dug or blown.

The visual irony comes into play yet gain, without the cameraperson trying hard to put forth their viewpoint, but doing it solely with candid cinematography. A government official is shown who spoke of how if the bauxite mines were allowed to start up, it would have given employment

to the villagers, apart from various other facilities that the company had promised to grant the villagers with, such as schools, colleges and medical facilities. The immediate scene afterwards in the film was that of a social activist and a human rights worker who explained how the local people were untrained and uneducated to take up administrative or managerial posts. And, hence they never got it. And, since most of the work was handled by machinery, it was only the low, menial groundwork that was given to the locals. The works related to administrative and managerial positions were also given to the outsiders as is shown in the documentary too, on the pretext of better education and training than the insiders. Thus, the entire claim of employment to the locals was proved null.

The filmmakers went to the villagers next, composed of some men and women, whom they asked about the land being given to the company already and the amount they were reimbursed with in return of the land. The prices they quote were as low as Rs. 18,000 for 25 acres, which were much below the normal rates then. When asked as to why they agreed for the deal, they said, "… It was because of the promises that the company people made: of that of a hospital, medical facilities, colleges and jobs for their children, availability of proper drinking water etc...". On being asked if any of it was fulfilled yet, they only gave a look of despair. The answer was a subtle 'No'. The women were more than aggressive on seeing what they were subjected to, the enticements they were promisedwith and the lies that screened up post the land acquisition by the company. A human right worker and later a woman from the village is shown in the movie who spoke of how the land being given to the company people in return for the services promised was not acceptable to her, as the land they have was a school in itself, it was a blessing from the ancestors that they had got. They could till and sow and reap in the land, and thus could have eaten and carried on with their livelihood; the land was there to stay, but the money they would get would eventually be gone, moreover it was not even guaranteed that they would get the better jobs once the company came with its battalion.

A woman is shown to claim how she did not want anything from Tata and Birla, but only wanted to be with what her ancestors had given to them and their children, they just wanted to study in those schools and be happy with

whatever jobs they would have got with that later. The camera was set on the landscape, yet again, with the people shown moving and staying happily in their land, while the narrative in the background was that of jobs that would have got created by the companies being set. The irony was yet again set well, the scene in the documentary is that of an old woman who is shown weaving a bamboo basket, who wore a beautifull bamboo earring, on which the camera zooms on, focusing on the local technological talent, implying also that a developmental project of a 'company' was not required to harness technology or teach technology in those areas. Some children were shown playing on a wooden see-saw, some villagers tilling and sowing the field. There were hens and chickens roaming around and grazing, kept by the villagers. Some are shown getting water from the nearby stream in earthen vessels. While it may appear to be romanticized; the depiction was realistic enough to not capture any sophistication; there was no luxury, but the needs are shown to be fulfilled enough for the villagers to live satisfied, without the help of any company by the corporates or the state. Without actually being vocal about it, the directors show what they feel and what the people want, through the cinematography: that they can have a happy, peaceful life if not bothered by the companies and without the company's facilities, if left on their own, with what nature had given to them: i.e., their *jal, jungle* and *zameen* (their river bodies/water, forests and land). Life was happy for all of them, unlike the cases with the company where only few of them would have got the jobs of labourers or otherwise, while most of the administrative jobs would have gone to the outsiders or to the machinery that the company official would have brought with them.

The film further, shows one of the officials giving his reasons of how resistance from the people was because of the missionaries, as they were "…the ones who did not want the poor to have any sort of growth and development, so that they can bank on their problems to advertise their religion…" The immediate scene is that of the villagers in a protest rally, the flag behind was Green in color, that was adopted by the local party JMM (Jharkhand Mukti Morcha); the initiator of whom was Shibu Soren, the famous leader from Jharkhand, who after having his father killed for speaking against the existing *Mahajani tradition*[3] had started the *Dhan Katti Andolan*[4] against the local elites, and took the form of a political party later, called the JMM (Jharkhand MuktiMorcha)

(Mallick, Munda, 100). The leader was shown to address a mass gathering, where he asked the mass "…Whether it was just the missionaries who suffered displacement, who had to give up on their land, or was it everyone who suffered in the hands of the state and the corporates…?". (The JMM after the initial few years had started including people from every section and community and not just the Adivasis). The speaker who was shown addressing the mass in the movie became secular after a point of time, while referring to the suffering of every community, irrespective of them being a Hindu or a Muslim. Thus making it clear, the message- that everybody should fight against the corporate and state atrocities. The people are shown to sing songs in groups about fighting against any form of oppression that should shall take them away from their land. The film further captures men drilling the mine space without masks or any other protection against the bauxite dust, the scene was accompanied by the voice-over of an interview with human right activists, who informed of how precautionary measures like masks were necessary for the workers so that they did not have respiratory diseases, quite contrary to the scene in the documentary; he further informed how the land should be sprinkled with some water after mining, so that the dust did not go to the nearby villages, affecting more people, which however was a practice seldom followed on any of the mining sites.

The film shows the interviews of several men who were caught, beaten up and jailed by the police for showing any kind of resistance. One of the men on being harrassed by the police said he would prefer to die than letting go of the land he got from his ancestor. The film further shows a clash between the villagers of Mahuadand, Palamu, with the administration in the form of police, who asked them to not to go on with the march, as it was a market day. The villagers are shown responding with a protest, although a peaceful one against the Birla Corporation. The turning point was the arrest of the entire camera team, who get jailed. The villagers stood up for them too, saying "….the camera people were their people and should be left..." the police eventually had to give up and leave the team. The entire episode of the filmmkers' arrest which stopped the shooting was presented in written text in the film, after which the recording resumed. The film shows another fight in Kukutpat where the villagers fought against the Hindalco company. It also showcases the forgery case that the

village in Mahuadand was an acquaintance of, in which the company had made a petition with false signatures of people who were already dead, and had declared their land to have been handed over to them. The film ends with a huge rally of people consisting of men and women, digging the earth and shouting slogans of never leaving the *'jal, jungle, zameen'* (water, forest, land). An activist is shown who came and talked to the people about how if the land stayed, later on, their children could carry on with a happy and satisfied life there. The film ends with a huge green cover of field with mountains, and men and women cultivating/ sowing crops, the background sound was that of a happy folk song sung during cultivation.

All the films in the very act of filming the movements and the voices are an act of resistance. However, this particular film even had the entire film crew arrested, and yet the filming continued after the crew came out.Thus giving an extraordinary agency to the documentary form; which while capturing reality unlike feature films is not just a protest form in its own, but, while capturing the protest and the social issues and then presenting it to a wider audience, in order to bring about a social justice and change, is also an act of protest and resistance, albeit in a non-violent way through filming it. The camera becomes the tool to resist.

Endnotes

1 Based on an interview conducted by the researcher in July 2017

2 Originally given to traditional spaces in the village where the indigenous people gathered to have a cultural evening- where people performed folk/ local dance and songs, for entertainment as well as learning

3 The Mahajani tradition was that of landlordism, where the local elites or money lenders, most of whom happened to be upper castes and class; after giving money to the lower classes of the village, took more in return, which mostly comprised of land. This was a major way of exploiting the local poor and acquiring their land, most of whom were Adivasis and low-income group people. Shibu Soren, a local leader, after seeing his father getting killed for speaking up against the exploitation, took on a militant/ aggressive way to fight against this system. He along with some other followers had set out on a *DhanKattiAndolan* against the mahajans and the money lenders, which involved cutting down the crops from the fields of the money lenders, especially the ones that they had acquired from the local people.

4 Cutting paddy from the landlords' fields

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Trans-creation in Literary Translation of Shanta Kumar's *Lajjo*

Suman Sharma

The word "Transcreation" is not found in any modern English dictionaries though it has been in use for many years. New Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (5th Edn. 1996) has recognised its usage in its supplement list of Indian English (Mukherjee 168). The word "Transcreation" is defined as a nounthat means, "Creative translation seen as producing a new version of the original work" (Mukherjee 168). P. Lal was a pioneer in Indian translation studies who coined the word "Transcreation", a concept that gives a wider space to the transl ator's creative genius (Gautam 1-5). In her scholarly paper, "Translation as Transcreation" Anjana Tiwari explains the meaning of translation in Hindi as "Anuvad" **(**Translation**)** which means to take away, while transcreation is explained as "Anurachna". She compares the act of translation as a cross between 'straight translation' and 'creative copywriting' and identifies it as reader friendly (98).Transcreation is a sort of creative transformation from one language into another.While the creative writer can give wings to the flight of his imagination, in myriad ways, the translators are restricted by the source text. They have to follow the path shown by the author. If they deflect much, they may be accused of infidelity. In a modern metaphor, the source author can be likened to a vehicle which can move in any direction in covering a creative field, while the translator has to move in the rails, laid down by the author and if he tries to deflect much from that path, there is every chance of him being derailed.

The literary translation, involves a process of "coding" and "decoding" of meaning. This may sound to be a simple process, but this is not the case usually. The translator has to cross a number of linguistic barriers to recreate a meaningful and aesthetically pleasing translation. The reason for undertaking such a methodology is that a reader approaches a translation as creative text and not as a mean to enhance knowledge through the informative contents.They expect, that the translation will give them the same sense of aesthetic pleasure as the original. The works of

various well known and acclaimed writers have been translated across the world in different languages. Many of these translations have been acknowledged as the work of art in itself. The case in point is the English rendering of Gabriela Garcia Maquez's well know novel, *Cien años de soledad* (One Hundred Year of Solitude). Marquez was quoted in Paris Review in 1981 stating: "A good translation is always a re-creation in another language. That's why I have such great admiration for Gregory Rabassa" (Orient). Similarly, some original works are so well translated that it is difficult to make out, whether the work is a translation or the original. The empirical evidence gives credence to the statement, that the translations are creative pieces in themselves.

Essentialism "claims that meaning is objective and that the translator's job is to find and transfer these and hence to remain as invisible as possible" (Chesterman 17). This stand of the essentialism regarding the stability of meaning is not tenable in the view of the fact, that each translation of a text (by the same or the different translators) is unique. One of the reasons for this inherent instability of meaning is that, each translator will interpret and recode the message differently, at creative, cognitive and emotional level. So non-essentialism, like the deconstruction has a major role to play in the praxis of translation and hence the translator has to play a major role in the process of creative language transaction. Literary translation is not a mechanical exercise, but is a creative one. This is because, the translator has number of choices in translating culturally loaded words and the translator's job is to find the right equivalences in the target language. It follows that translation is a recreated text, organically different and original work. Unknowingly or knowingly, the translator's creativity is at play and to negotiate the challenges of translation, the translator may deviate from the original text. It is widely accepted that international culture is not homogenous and is either marginalised or dominant. Translation is thus not only a replacement of words by their equivalents in another language, but it is also a mode of résistance of canonical cultures. Hence transcreators unwittingly tend to nativize the target language. Hence, to avoid a mere slavish imitation, a forceful transcreation involving temper and experiment is a necessity.

The transcreation, not only involves a simple translation, but a sort of

improvement, rejuvenation and rewriting of the original text. It improves upon the flaws of the original and also acts as a problem-solving technique. For example, in this sentence: "...श्मशान घाट की बाईं और सड़क के दायें किनारे पर वह चीड़ का एक बड़ा वृक्ष था" (Kumar 52), the author had indulged in verbosity, in pointing out the location of a pine tree in the narrative. This sentence was translated in a straight forward manner and with brevity of words as: "…it was a big pine tree, located between the cremation ground and the road" (Sharma 72). Occasionally, some verbs of the source language sentences are replaced by the non-equivalent verbs, from the target language. This is to account for, "reader's cultural and intellectual background" (Baker 222). Moreover, the translator has to make sure that the audiences are able to comprehend the indications present in the translation. For example, it is perfectly all right for a Hindi speaking person in India, to drink tea, but English sensibilities will get disturbed, if they had to drink tea. Instead, the English people usually sip tea. As far as drinks are concerned, anyone associated with English culture knows what drinks mean for the English people. So, in translation of this sentence, "भाभीजी आपने तो चाय पिलाने को कहा था; पर आप तो चाय से नहलाने लग पड़ी" (30) the verb "पिलाना" was replaced by English verb, "have" and the sentence was translated as; "*Bhabhiji* you had asked me to have tea, but you have started bathing us with tea." Similarly, it made perfect sense to the readers of *Lajjo* when Sumer had said: "मुझे लगता है लाजो के पैर अवश्य झुलस गए होंगे" (30). However, the speakers of English know that foot cannot get burned in English, but the skin on the foot can. Hence the above-mentioned sentence was translated as: "I feel that the skin on Lajjo's foot is singed" (36). Similarly, the verbs introducing the direct speech of the characters in the source text was monotonous. In most instances, the direct quotes were introduced by the phrase: "उसने कहा". However, the translation of these introductions was dynamic, involving multifarious approaches according to the context, relevance and situations in the text.

At times the narrative in the text is emotionally charged and author had intentionally used special linguistic style to produce a poignant effect on the readers. Translation in these cases has to operate, beyond the scope of the theory of equivalences, especially in the light of the view that even within a text, a word cannot be simply replaced by its prepositional synonym. For example, the idiomatic phrase "आपके दिल पे जो बीती है" in a middle of the source text

sentence; "सुमेरचन्द जी आपके दिल पे जो बीती है उसे शब्दों में प्रकट नहीं किया जा सकता" cannot be translated with its exact equivalent, but has to be translated keeping in mind the contextual background against which these words were uttered (Kumar 35). These words were spoken by the District Magistrate, when he had come to express his condolences, on Pyar Chand's death in the war. Sumer Chand was aggrieved that all the enemy's territories, captured by Indian soldiers, including Hazipur Chouki, were returned to the Pakistan, according to Tashkand agreement. It was in the battle for Hazipur that Pyar Chand had laid down his life. I had first translated the phrase as: "what has happened to you". However, during the first editing, I realized that this translation was not able to transfer the intended message. This translation could have been interpreted in multiple ways. It could have meant that, either something had happened to a person or a person is ill and that these words were spoken by someone to express his/ her sympathy. With these thoughts in mind, the sentence was transcreated as: "Sumer Chand *Ji*, what you underwent cannot be expressed in words" (Sharma 45). The translator, felt that this translation had been able express fully, the intended message of the source.

While translating Narender Nirmohi's short story "Bukhari" from Hindi, into English, the present researcher comes across a peculiar difficulty. At particular instance during the narrative, the author had tried to bring out the emotional state of soldiers, deeply troubled by the death of fellow soldier, due to excesses committed by an officer. The translator felt that to successfully translate the plight of these soldiers, it is imperative that audiences have some idea about socio-cultural history of the south Asia. A few lines from the source text and its English translation is reproduced to make the point clear:"सोच और चिन्ता से झुका सर, अभी अभी बिदा करके आए बापस धीरे धीरे उठ रहा था" (Nirmohi 32).'The head drooped, because of the turmoil and concern and then rose like that of a father's head, who had just bid adieu to his daughter's *Doli*" (Sharma "Bukahri" 2).

Now the drooping of the head of a soldier, has been compared to that of a father, who just bids adieu to his daughter's *doli*. The researcher's first impulse was to simply translate the word "doli" with the word 'palanquin' and that seemed to be the right equivalent of the word in the target language. However, on second thoughts, he felt that, justice would not be done, if

only a surface replacement is made. For the Hindus, the word "doli" does not simply mean a wooden structure that is used in carrying a new bride to her in-law's house but has deeper psycho-cultural connotations. For a Hindu father of yesteryear, when his daughter sat in the palanquin, after her marriage, it meant that all her ties with her parents' home have been severed. This is quite traumatic for the parents, as well as the daughter. Hence, the word was retained and was added to the gloss, in a bid to maintain the emotional effects of the original in the translation. For a non-Hindi reader, even the Hindi word *maa* is quite confusing. The word means mother in English, but to call Parvati as maa is different and contains religious connotations, which is similar to calling Gandhiji as *Bapu* (father). Hence, translation is not a simple replacement of surface equivalents, but extends far beyond that. Bassnett writes:

> Translation is a kind of textual journey from one context into another. What distinguishes translation from other kinds of writing is precisely the dual relationship involved in that Journeying. There is always a source of translation, an original text, and the act of translating involves the transformation of that source into something other, into a text that can be read by a completely new set of readers, in another time and another place. (78)

Similarly, the speakers of a particular language have a unique sense of humour.The jokes rendered in a language, may not make much sense to the speaker of another language. The translator may make a fool of him/ herself, if s/he engages in a "word for word" translation in translating humour. For example, popular TV serial "The Kapil Sharma Show" may not make any sense to the European or western audiences. Even the south Indian or the people from the northeast may not understand the underlying meaning of the humour, exhibited in the show and some may take umbrage.

Sometimes the theories of equivalences fail and the translator has to translate according to the conventions of the target language.For example, if this part of original sentence**:** ... की उसका काम जल्दी कर दें (Kumar 82) was translated according to the theory of 'word for word' translation, this sentence would have roughly translated as: "…to do this girl's work fast." This however, would not have made any sense to the target audience. So, the translator

had translated this sentence as: "… to finish off her business expeditiously" (Sharma 122). Here, the translator had taken care of tenor and the register of target language to convey the inherent meaning of the original text, to the target language reader. To translate the word "जल्दी", I chose the word "expeditiously" over the word "fast" because it perfectly suited the context, whereas the word "fast" would have caused ambiguity and confusion. Similarly, a sentence like**:** "क्या मुसीबत है यह भी!" (Kumar 72) was translated as "What a trouble this too is!" (Sharma 106). It can be observed here, that in this translation too, the source language lexical items, are not simply replaced with their target language equivalents. In translating, a Hindi phrase, "तुम नई रौशनी के छोकरे", the translator instead of focussing on literal precision, chose to generate a "dynamic equivalent." Hence, this phrase was translated, keeping in mind the target language register and the tenor usage and this phrase was translated as, "You new generation youngster."

The "selectional restrictions", put up by the target language, justify the omission, addition and replacements of lexical items (14). Many a times a translator has to retort to "circumambulation" in a bid to meet the expectations of the prospective readers (Baker 57). For example, following sentence: "पति मिलते ही मैं विधवा हो गई" (Kumar 52), was translated as: "I soon became a widow" (Sharma 72). Here, the word "husband" was summarily deleted, because its, usage become obsolete, as per the cultural norm of target language. It is because, the girls from west, usually do not get husbands, but chooses them. Otherwise also, the translation was able to cut across the original message without this word. Similarly, the word, "रोटी" was replaced by the word, "food" because in Hindi, *roti* may mean, "full meal" and not just a piece of bread. Similarly, in transcreation, of this paragraph. "लाजो कुछ बोल तो सकती नहीं थी, इसलिए आग्रह भी कैसे करती। वह कुछ देर और खड़ी रही। सुमेर समझ गया, बोला, अच्छा, तम्बाकू भर के ले आ–एक चिलम, बस और कुछ नहीं" (Kumar 37), the additions of certain lexical items were necessary. If the translator had simply translated the phrase "सुमेर समझ गया" as "Sumer understood", a question would have naturally arisen in the mind of readers, as to what he understood. This would have caused a semantic gap and hence the word "reason" was added to complete the sense. Finally, this phrase was translated as, "Sumer understood the reason" (Sharma 48).

A collocation like, "कच्चा फर्श" cannot be literally translated as, "earthen

floor" or "raw floor", as it may sound weird to the target audience. So, this wordwas simply replaced by the word "earth" that made a perfect sense in English. The difference in collocational patterning in two languages requires the additions of certain lexical items, which fills the collocational gaps. For example, in this Hindi sentence: "गाँव में बांस की लकड़ी तथा बाण की बुनी हुई चारपाई ही एक मात्र फर्नीचर था" (Kumar 33), was translated as: "The cot made up of bamboo and *baan*was the only furniture in the village houses" (Sharma 42). So, it can be observed that the word "village" was added to fill the linguistic gap between two languages.Similarly, to maintain the collocational and semantic propriety of the target language, the word "आवाज़" was dropped from this source text sentence: "दूसरे कमरे से सुमेर के कराहने की आवाज़ आई" (Kumar 56) and the sentence was translated as: "They heard Sumer's groan from another room" (Sharma 80).

The quest for fidelity to the source text, both at level of form and the meaning was achieved, in some rare instances, in the extant translation. While translating certain paragraphs of the source text, it seemed that translation was smooth and natural. In those moments of euphoria, the translator was able to seize the moment and quench his thrust for such hard to find fidelity to the source text. This particular phenomenon was witnessed, while translating these series of sentences: "आप घबराओ मत। यहीं बैठो। सरकारी ईमारत खाली है, रात आप वहाँ पर सो जाओ। आपका सब प्रकार का प्रबंध हो जाएगा।"(Kumar 47). To the translator's surprise, these sentences were easily translated as: "Do not you worry. Be seated here. A room is vacant in government building. You sleep there in night. Everything will be arranged for you" (Sharma 66). Though the translator has to use his creative skills and replace certain source lexical items, with equivalent target lexical items, it was relatively easy to translate these sentences. Similarly, the close equivalence achieved in the translation of the following sentences, strengthened the translator's faith in Hindi-English translation. Original sentence: "लपटों का धुआं आकाश की ओर दौड़ रहा था" (Kumar 59). Translation: "The smokes from the flames was running into the sky" (Sharma 84). The part of sentences like, "उसने मन ही मन धन्यवाद किया और अपने आपसे बोली..." (Kumar47) was faithfully rendered as, "She thanked him from the core of her heart and thought . . ." (Sharma 66). Here, the equivalent of reporting verb is suitable modified, whereas the idiomaticity of the source language

was maintained. Similarly, at word level too, the equivalence was achieved in some instances. For example, the Hindi words *vat-vriksh* was faithfully translated as "Banyan tree."

The technique of introducing back references during narration is different across the languages. For example, a Hindi sentence like this: "उसने लाजो को कहा" (Kumar 57), refer back to narrative in the preceding sentence. Actually, Kanta had touched Sumer's hand and found it to be feverous. So, if this sentence is to be translated simply, then the translation would be roughly like: "She told Lajjo", which is correct as per the prepositional meaning of the words in the sentence, but the question is: Was this the actual intention of author? Answer to this question is: probably not. So, taking care of the all aspect of narrative context, the sentence was translated as: "She apprised Lajjo about the matter" (Sharma 80).

For a translator, it is a serious challenge to restructure long sentence in the target language and requires him/ her to take a bold decision with regards to altering the original structures of these sentences, so as to transfer the inherent message of these sentences in all its entirety. The translator is also under severe pressure to transfer meaning, message, aesthetics and the structures of the source text, into the target text. For example, the translation of this extraordinary long sentence in the opening paragraph of source text proved to be a herculean task for the translator: "हाथों में लाल चूड़ा, माथे पे बिन्दी, सिर में सिन्दूर और विवाह के नए कपड़ों में सज–धज कर थाली हाथ में लिए जब वह घर के बड़े दरवाजे से धीरे धीरे कदम उठाती बाहर की ओर निकली तो ऐसा लगा जैसे वह सुहागरात के लिए पति की सेज पर जा रही हो।" (Kumar 1). After many unsuccessful attempts, the translator had translated the above sentence as:"As she slowly stepped outfrom the main door of the house in her new wedding dress, carrying the plate in her hands, wearing red bangles on her wrists, putting a *bindi* on her forehead and vermillion between the partings of her hair, it appeared as if she is moving towards her husband's bed on the first night after marriage" (Sharma 1). It was really difficult to replace the numerous cohesive devices used in source sentence, with equivalent devices of the target language. Because, either such devices were wanting or such devices didn't exist in reality. It required high degree of creative skills to transfer exactly, what the translator had intended originally. The entire effort of breaking the structure of the original sentence and then realigning them

according to the grammatical conventions of the target language can be compared to the operation carried by an expert cardiac surgeon, who dexterously replaces the original heart with its, artificial substitute, after ripping up the patient's chest. Aided by the working knowledge of the syntactics and the semantics of the target language, it was purely creativity endeavor to reposition the punctuations and lexical items of the source text sentence at the appropriate places in the target text sentences. Another sentence of the source text: "उसके शहीद चाचा का सबने मान–सम्मान किया, जलसा हुआ, शहीद के चित्र को फूलमालाएँ पहनाई गई, गाँव के स्कूल का नाम उसी के नाम पे रखा दिया गया।" (Kumar 23), was translated as: "Everyone offered tributes to his martyr uncle. A procession was carried and the martyr's picture was garlanded. The village school was named after him" (Sharma 26). If we examine the original sentences and its translation, we will observe that the original sentence was broken down in three smaller sentences. The translator could have joined the sentences with conjunction "and", but again this would not have the achieved the natural cohesion, as was seen in the original sentence. While in this case, a large source sentence was synthesized, the extant translation saw the combination of many sentences of the source text into a larger sentence in the target text. For example, these sentences, हर युग का अपना एक धर्म होता है। अपनी मर्यादा और मान्यताएँ होती हैं। " (Kumar 24) was translated as: "Every age has its own religion, its own dignity and its own assumptions (Sharma 27)." Translator was forced to separate the two sentences, as per the syntactic norms of the target language. Apart from grammatical reason, some sentences were combined for the semantic reason too. For example, these twosentences लज्जो घर में अकेली थी, इसलिए उसे ही पानी लाना पड़ता था, उसके वृद्ध ससुर तो जा नहीं सकते थे।" (Kumar 25) were translated as; "Lajjo was only one in the house and hence she had to fetch the water from the Babri, as her old father-in-law could not perform this task" (Sharma 30). Translator encountered an interesting problem in translating this sentence. At the level of equivalence, the first sentence would have been translated as: "She was alone in the house and hence she had to fetch the water from the Babri." There was every possibility that such a translation would have been misinterpreted by the target audience. They may have thought that, at one point of time, Lajjo was alone in the house, so she had to fetch the water herself. Similarly, the simple translation

of second sentence could have meant that his old father-in-law could not go. However, this was not what the author had intended. So, the translator took a conscious decision, to translate these sentences at level of "implicature" (Baker 218). So, it could be observed that the actual translation of these sentences was self-explanatory and clearly explained the circumstances, under which Lajjo was forced to fetch water from the Babri. Hence it follows that, a successful translation has to be forceful transcreation, where the role of translator is not limited to mere replacement of the lexical items of the source language with the similar lexical item of target language, but the translator also has a proactive role in capturing the intention and imagination of the author.

Sometimes a punctuation mark of the source text is replaced by different punctuation mark in the target text. For example, in the following quotation: "भाभी हमारा जीना भी कोई जीना है!" (Kumar 26), the exclamation mark put up by the author at the closing, was replaced by the question mark, by the translator and the sentence was translated as: "*Bhabhi,* is our life worth living?" (Sharma 30). The translator was in serious dilemma, about how to translate this sentence. At first instance, this sentence was also translated as: "*Bhabhi*, what is our life?" Considering the theory of fidelity, the translator was under sub conscious pressure to retain the original punctuation. The rules of English grammar regarding question marks read as: "They are necessary, however in the case of rhetorical questions, even though no answer is expected" (Manser 355). Hence, inspite of being aware that the author had used the exclamation mark, in a bid to show the emotional state of Kanta's mind, the translator had replaced it with question marks as per the grammatical usage of English. In another instance, the question mark at the end of a direct quotation/ question was replaced by the exclamation mark. Let's examine the sentence and its translation. The original sentence is: "नहीं पहुँचे?" विस्मय से ज्ञाननाथ ने पूछा।" (Kumar 53) was translated as: "Had not yet returned!" Gyan Nath was astonished. (Sharma 74). Surprisingly, the author ended this sentence by a question mark and not by exclamation mark, apparently due to grammatical usage restriction. However, to compensate for the loss of emotional emphasis, the author had added a word "विस्मय" after this quotation, that amply expresses, the feeling of surprise, exhibited by the speaker. The translator too had the

choice, to put the question mark at the end of this quote and then translate the reported speech as: “Gyan Nath asked with surprise?”, but somehow, his creative vigour demanded otherwise. The translator felt that the word “astonished” have more emotive force then the word “surprise” and hence the exclamation replaced the question mark at the end of this source quote.

Translation experiences like the one recorded above, demonstrate that translation indeed is an act of creative arbitrariness. Capturing the imagination and intention of author, then recoding it, in a required manner is a creative art. To bind this artistic work in the limits of theories, norms, prescription and conventions is both undesirable and unpragmatic. The inherent stability of meaning in a language, gives freedom to the translator to interpret the source text in any manner.The sharp difference, in the syntactic conventions, semantics, culture and the history of any two languages, necessitates the translator to be creator. Otherwise also the translation has to be aesthetically pleasing, so that it is also appreciated at par with the original. An unexciting and simple translation is less likely to engage the reader and they may approach the text only for its contents. Hence, translation is kind of re-creation that provides the best solution to even the trickiest problems of translation.

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Borders and Boundaries: Reading Saadat Hasan Manto's "Toba Tek Singh", "The Last Salute" and "Yazid"

Barnali Saha

The things of the past are never viewed in their true perspective or receive their just value; but value and perspective change with the individual or the nation that is looking back on its past.

– Friedrich Nietzsche

Long years ago we made a tryst with destiny, and now the time comes when we shall redeem our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially. At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom.

– *Jawaharlal Nehru*

The Partition of India in 1947 is a critical watershed in the history of the Indian subcontinent. Casting a gloom on the aura of celebration underlining Jawaharlal Nehru's famous "Tryst with Destiny" speech delivered on the eve of India's independence, the inauguration of India and Pakistan as new nation states came with a grotesque accompaniment of genocidal violence. In fact, Nehru's implied reference to this cataclysmic violence unleashed by the Partition in his momentous speech as mere "pains of labour" (Nehru "Tryst with Destiny") not only naturalizes the largescale communal violence as an organic accompaniment in the attainment of nationhood, but also underlines the point that the "fecundity of the unexpected," to quote Pierre Proudhon, far exceeded "the statesman's prudence."(Proudhon qtd. in Hannah Arendt 7)

Echoing Nehru's general view of the Partition as an aberration, the nationalist history of India too elides its violent legacy as a unique "limit case" that defies historical reconstruction (Bhaba 250). Nevertheless, the vicious legacy of Partition lives within the liminal depths of the Indian subcontinent's alternative past occupying "an inassimilable place outside history" (Pandey 16).

Since Partition changed the socio-cultural dynamics of the Indian subcontinent, a reading of Partition as a corollary of Indian independence is

important. Such a reading will not only acknowledge Partition as an inescapable truth, but will also demonstrate the importance of borders as boundaries that separated thousands of people from their home and hearth as Partition unleashed one of the largest mass migrations of all time. It will also illustrate how the macro-politics that regulate such cartographic arbitration ignores the consequences that the negotiation entails in the psychosomatics of the citizens.

Research articles like Alex Tickell's '"How many Pakistans?" considers the border as a "contested space" and critically engages with the issue of interstitial space as determining national identity (Tickell 158). His paper in which he proposes an "academic reevaluation of the events of 1947" touches on a range of topics leading to a "postcolonial spatial awareness in the study of Partition literature" but lacks a central focus, leading to a lacuna (Tickell 157).

Michiel Baud and William Van Schendel in their study of borderlands, on which Tickell's work is based, talk about borderland dynamics and is extremely useful in understanding the idea of borders as the ultimate symbol of political status quo. Moving away from the hitherto relevant concern of borderland studies on "legal, geographical and geopolitical questions", Baud and Schendel direct their attention to the historical effect of borders and look at the "social realities provoked by them (212)." They use the term "border" for the "political divides that were the result of state building" and study how borders "all over the world became crucial elements in the new, increasingly global system of states," (214). In their paper they have argued that "from the perspective of national centers of authority, the border between countries is a sharp line, an impenetrable barrier" but from the perspective of the border "borderlands are broad scenes of interactions" between people on both sides of the border (216). This approach brings to mind Sven Tagil and his colleagues who note that "boundaries separate people (or groups of people) and the separating qualities of boundaries influence interaction between them" (14).

Taking a cue from the paradox of border studies underlined by Baud and Schendel and Alex Tickell, the present research paper seeks to re-evaluate the events of 1947 by directing attention to the spatial crisis of

the negotiation of national boundaries by reading three representative short pieces by Saadat Hasan Manto. These short works by Manto chosen as primary texts for the paper –"Toba Tek Singh," "The Last Salute" and "Yazid"— together critique the politics of Partition and suggest that the macro-political tendency of communal configuration of society by cartographic mediation of borders is anabsurd project. These three short works appraise the state-centered approach that pictures borders as "unchanging, uncontested and unproblematic" by dramatizing the "struggles and adaptations that the imposition of a border causes in the region bisected by it" (Baud and Schendel 216).

The paper seeks to read Manto in the light of the tradition of semiology developed by Ferdinand de Saussure. Saussure thinks that a semiological system is any "system of signs that expresses ideas" (*Course in General Linguistics* 33, 160) and the two components of a sign—the signifier and the signified—share an arbitrary relation. This arbitrariness is a leitmotif in Manto's stories and is not only an integral part of his creative psychology but also the most important element he uses to bring home his belief that Partition in his view was farcical and "despite trying" he "could not separate India from Pakistan and Pakistan from India" (Jalal 146). By reading Manto's response to the cartographic negotiation of borders as an absurd political feat leading to myriad shades of violence, the paper attempts to underscore what Nietzsche proclaims: "things of the past are never viewed in their true perspective or receive their just value; but value and perspective change with the individual or the nation that is looking back on its past". Although the paper uses Saussure's structuralism as its critical point of inception, it goes beyond its schematic parameters because Manto and his work defies circumscription of all kinds, academic or otherwise.

"Toba Tek Singh"

The locus of Manto's creative-imaginative work on Partition centers on his own obligation to come to terms with the unique contingency of the event. His oeuvre after the Partition betrays the following concern:

> Now that we were free, had subjugation ceased to exist? Who would be our slaves? When we were colonial subjects, we would dream of freedom, but now that we were free, what would our dreams be? Were we even free? …India was free. Pakistan was free…. But man was a slave in

> both countries, of prejudice, religious fanaticism, of bestiality, of cruelty. (Flemming 8)

The pathos of dislocation ushered in by the national-communal division of India and Pakistan is scathingly critiqued by him in his epochal short story "Toba Tek Singh". In the story sense and nonsense are inextricably concocted and the chaos of Partition is communicated by the comical stupefaction of the inmates of a lunatic asylum in Lahore to the news of the territorial division of India and Pakistan. As if to comment on the insanity of grafting somatically absent national borders to divide people who had a common cultural legacy, Manto situates his story in the company of raving lunatics. The spatial-temporal complexity that beset the citizens of the newly independent India and Pakistan is evoked by Manto as a crisis of location wherein the lunatics are dis-embedded from their former common lunatic seat to be appropriated as citizens of India and Pakistan respectively. Their incomprehension is embodied in the following passage:

> As to where Pakistan was located, the inmates knew nothing. That was why both the mad and the partially mad were unable to decide whether they were now in India or Pakistan. If they were in India, where on earth was Pakistan? And if they were in Pakistan, then how come that until only the other day it was India? (Manto 6)

To avoid the puzzling contingency of dubious national belonging, one of the inmates stations himself atop a tree and declares his wish to neither live in India nor in Pakistan but to live atop the tree. This comical subverting of territorial belonging occasioned by the grand scale narrative of Indian independence further dims the euphoric glow of India's freedom at midnight and illustrates Manto's disavowal of the ideology of national affiliation. It is through the eccentricity of this lunatic that Manto represents the emotions of the "millions of people on both sides of the border (who) refused to accept the finality of the borders" (Chandraet al 502) and in doing so they challenged the "political status quo of which borders are the ultimate symbol" (Baud and Schendel 211).

Manto deploys his protagonist, Bishan Singh, to evoke the fragmented nature of self-identity from the point of view of a subaltern. His idea of selfhood is so inextricably related to his former village that he is consternated to learn at the border where the exchange of lunatics on the basis of their religious is to

take place that his village is now situated in Pakistan. Upon hearing the news, having no other option to defy this dis-embedding of his former cultural landscape of Toba Tek Singh, the protagonist positions himself in the territorial limbo of the no-man's-land. Here, evoking the analogous gesture of his mate who climbed a tree to avoid the eventuality of national belonging, Bishan Singh positions his petrified self in the territorial halfway house where he lets out a shriek of protest and dies. His death and his previous garbled speech deployed as a linguistic caricature is his subjective protest against "the content of the word 'Order'" that "always indicates repression," as Roland Barthes had said (Hiebert 95).The *order* here stands for Bishan Singh's position as a religiously appropriated masculine citizen of the Indian nation. His final shriek is a derisive critique of the violence and insanity of national-communal division.

The whole story revolves around the eradication of essentialist choices as ultimate. It underscores that the signifier of lunacy in Bishan Singh signifying mental instability or the borderland representing a "social reality" (Baud and Schendel) with continuing geographical fixity as indiscriminate and motivated only by social convention for, in reality, "There was no sign of …the border" and Bishan Singh and his subaltern friends were "just a sea of people who had swallowed up all the marks which demarcated one country from another" (Tickell 171).

When one reflects on this fact, one may remember that Saussure has repeatedly emphasized the social nature of language as a system of signs. He has seen language as a social fact, one that exists by virtue of "a sort of contract signed by the members of a community," (*CGL* 31, 14) and just like a language is a social product, conventions that are part of the cultural sign systems of a society are also an extension of the social fact. Therefore, certain signs conveying certain ideas is socially sanctioned by its users; nevertheless, Sausserian linguistics unequivocally point out that the symbiosis between a concept (signified) and a sound image (signifier) is unmotivated "that is they are not naturally connected" and are arbitrary (Holdcroft 53). Being "imprinted on our mind together" a signifier and a signified "are mutually evocative in all circumstances" (54). Manto subverts the rules of inclusion and exclusion that qualifies border restrictions and situates his protagonist in the no-man's-land

and underlines the idea that "National borders are political constructs, imagined projections of territorial power….they reflect…the mental images of politicians, lawyers and intellectuals" (Baud and Schendel 211). The intrinsic connection between borders (signifier) and boundaries (signified) is not a "spontaneous" expression "of natural reality dictated…by natural forces" but is the result of social convention that approves the connection (214). Manto questions the politics of Partition by separating the signifier (border) from the signified (boundary) and holds in sharp relief his protagonist Bishan Singh as a putative counter example underlining arbitrariness of the signifier-signified symbiosis.

"The Last Salute"

Baud and Schendel has importantly noted that "borderlands in which the border does not coincide with natural and cultural divides are potentially more complex than borderlands in which these distinctions are clearer" (226). "Symbols of national unity (…the flag, the national army…) take a special, more emphatic meaning in (such) borderlands" (233). "This display of statehood symbolizes the effort of each state to maintain exclusive control of its half of the borderland, and in this respect, the border is the ultimate symbol of national sovereignty. But this does not imply that the effort is ever wholly successful" (226). This lack of success is creatively illustrated by Manto in his story "The Last Salute". Here Manto critiques the paradoxical nature of borders as both unifying and separating people and thereby underlines the artificial nature of borders as "mental constructs" that "become social realities" (242). The concept of borders entrenching limits for people unearths the idea of the "self" and the "other,"differences that are, as Saussure says, "interdependent terms in which the value of each term results solely from the simultaneous presence of the other" (*CGL* 159, 114) Therefore, in Manto's story Rab Nawaz and Ram Singh stand as signifiers who "define each other's value" as border guards, custodians of Pakistani and Indian patriotism, without one, the value of the other is zilch.

"The Last Salute" touches on the dialectics of semiology and Saussure's famous thesis which states that the relationship between a sign and its representative physical signification is an arbitrary one. It illustrates how even context-bound nationalistic patriotism in the military as a given

is indiscriminate. There is nothing in the quality of patriotism that Rab Nawaz or Ram Singh display that denotes the specific meaning of communal partisanship in their role as vanguards of national border, a deified part in nationalistic terms. In fact, it echoes Partha Chatterjee's argument that in "Indian nationalism the civic demarcation of universal spaces of public and private selfhood conflicts with and fails to map onto, the cultural and metaphysical field where 'the indigenous national elite had imagined its true community'" (Chatterjee 159).

"The Last Salute", therefore, demonstrates this concern and presents India and Pakistan as identical twin images of one another. This uncanny replication of politically designated enemies is intended to critique the geopolitical tendency of inscribing borderlands as recognized national demarcations. In the story, the fighting sides are conspicuous by their absence to one another and the frontier resonates with personal abuses hurled from the opposing trenches. The abuses take the form of a nonchalant verbal repertoire between politically entitled enemies who were once friends working together in the erstwhile colonial Indian Army. This further underlines the grotesque doubling the story initiates as Rab Nawaz and Ram Singh, subaltern representatives of Pakistani and Indian army respectively, are relieved to discover one another in the opposing sides and exchange sporadic ammunition more as banter than real military standoff "…when he saw a familiar face among the enemy, he forgot for a while why he was fighting what was the compulsion of raising his rifle against erstwhile friends" (*Mottled Dawn* 29). Rab Nawaz, like the innumerable others dwelling in the black marginalia of society who are spoken for, given orders, and perennially silenced, comes to the natural conclusion that such "intricate matters" of high politics that validate friends and enemies based on demographic scope and religious identity are "beyond the comprehension of a simple soldier" (*Mottled Dawn* 30). Manto's story is a comment on the hyperreality of borders as a simulation of a non-existent social reality insisted upon by the nationalist political discourse.

In fact, the end of the story when the dying Ram Singh in his state of utter delirium mentally occupies a limbo like Bishan Singh forgets that

they were *fighting* "a war" and engages in nostalgic remuneration of the past with his friend Rab Nawaz who had accidently shot him by mistake and salutes his erstwhile Indian sergeant major, is a classic example of the inability of the consciousness to distinguish reality from the simulation of reality (*Mottled Dawn* 35). Only, in this case, the mortally wounded Ram Singh could see the reality clearly. The end of the story takes us back to the question that perturbed Manto: "Weren't the basic problems confronting Indians and Pakistanis the same?" (146). The palpable sense of self-destruction indicated by Ram Singh's death suggest a presence of a hermetically sealed social environment where an artificial sense of national homogeneity is set to replace relative social ties.

"Yazid"

One of the central concerns of Manto's writing on the Partition is his critique of sociopolitical violence and linguistic communalism. In "Yazid" Manto critiques the modern validity of classical archetypes and "discusses the power of names to engender violence or to change the course of history" (Bruce 2). The writer here reconfirms that the relation between the signifier and the signified is capricious and always follows a social convention. Sans that convention, the essentializing tendency of a signifier, the name Yazid, in this case, signifying a relative social history is defunct. The binary of negativity gone, Yazid could indeed be a sign that could be decoded or interpreted in a light other than its given negativity.

In the context of *langue* (a particular language) and *parole* (speech), Saussure argues that *langue* is "both a social product of the faculty of speech and a collection of necessary conventions that have been adopted by a social body to permit individuals to exercise that faculty." (*CGL*, 25, 9) Effective intercommunication between members of a linguistic community underlines the social fact that administers the use of langue because when a group of people engage in conversation "all will produce— not exactly of course, but approximately— the same signs united with the same concepts." (*CGL*, 29, 13). Therefore, language here functions as "a storehouse filled by the members of a given community through their active use of speaking (parole), a grammatical system that has potential existence in each brain, or more specifically in the brains of a group of individuals. For language is not complete in any speaker; it exists perfectly only within a collectivity." The reciprocated familiarity of the

values of signifiers of a given language is, consequently, determined by social conventions that are, according to Lewis, "regularities in action, or in action and belief, which are arbitrary but perpetuate themselves because they serve some sort of common interest. Past conformity breeds future conformity because it gives one a reason to go on conforming" (4). Therefore, the value of a linguistic term validated by convention, sustains its linguistic and social importance through continued usage.

In "Yazid" we see Manto's deliberate attempt to re-signify a socially crystallized signifier that has a common impression of negativity on the minds of the speakers. Here, the very act of naming as confirming communal identity is ironically subverted. Manto invokes the *Marsiyah* narratives of the Shia community that detests the name Yazid "as a usurper of Islamic political authority" and as a "metonymy of un-Islamic and tyrannical rule," and attempts to voluntarily dismiss their cultural value (qtd. in Bruce 9). Observing the post-Partition South Asian culture through the kaleidoscope of names, Manto here underlines the absurdity besetting the signifier-signified relation and points out that "there is no natural link" between the two (Holdcroft 124). The crucial point here is the link between naming and the rhetoric of violence that surrounds the act of naming. The value-laden archetypical name of Yazid as the enemy of the righteous mediates between a mythical history of violence and an actual history of Partition trauma wherein the Islamic community is labelled as the victim (read Husain) of the atrocities of the former. The binaries Hindustan-Pakistan, enemy-friend, self-other, victim-predator are cast in sharp relief in the story to invite us to logically consider the violence of difference. Additionally, the story proposes a break from the passive assimilation of a social fact which, according to Durkheim, involves "any way of acting…capable of exercising over the individual an external constraint" (Lukes 59). Manto here plays with two essential and interdependent characteristics of language—its generality and its externality. The latter establishes that an "individual does not have the power to change a sign in any way once it has become established in the linguistic community," (*CGL*, 101, 69) and the "community itself cannot control so much as a single word; it is bound to the existing language." *(CGL*, 104, 71) Manto intends to disrupt this convention of linguistic stability in "Yazid" by reconstructing the communally endorsed practice of naming an individual. His

counter-cultural opposition to perpetuate the archetypical linguistic legacy is an executive act of *parole* (speech) intended to "dislocate the 'rule-governed creativity' of the kind involved in the ordinary everyday use of language" (Chomsky 23).

Further, a close reading of the text suggests Manto's earlier preoccupation with the politics of naming, a theme he chose for his "Some Thoughts about Names" published in 1954 in a collection entitled *Bitter, Sour,* [and] *Sweet.* The first essay in this collection, 'Writing on Walls', extolls the virtues of creative freedom engendered by the bathroom walls in a mosque and suggests the idiosyncratic and grotesque inappropriateness of naming a place as foul when, in actuality, it acts as the microcosmic utopian chamber affecting freedom from all kinds of censorship.

Manto revisits the theme of the rhetoric of naming to further comment on the absurdity of national borders as heightening animosity between neighbors in "Yazid". Written in face of the political contingency of India blocking water supply to Pakistan, "Yazid" immediately brings to mind the tyranny of the licentious and inebriated Ummayad caliph Yazid toward the Prophet Mohammad's grandson, Husain, in Karbala. The text of this archetypical religious legacy is metonymically grafted into the present day post-Partition landscape of Pakistan where India threatens to become the infamous army of Yazid blocking water and killing the innocent. The binary tectonics of a righteous, un-Islamic and tyrannical India and a victimized and brave Pakistan is obvious, only Manto refuses to cast his protagonist Karimdad as the martyr Husain and invokes, instead, a critic of the religious and sectarian identity. Thereby, he disinclines to be a party to the exclusionary discourse of borders acting as boundaries separating the *otherized* enemy.

Set against the backdrop of intercommunal Partition violence that killed the protagonist Karimdad's father and his brother-in-law, the story touches upon the dialectic of "transpositional understanding," of the enemy's point of view (Sen 163). Karimdad refuses to join in with the villager's vilification of India as an unjust enemy and declines any association between India and the claque of the Yazid thereby refusing to "implicate himself in the discourse of enmity and the violence it engenders"

(Bruce 13). His response is centered on the logic that in the face of imminent war it is foolish to expect justice from one's enemy. Addressing the villagers he says: "Why do you forget that they are not only our enemy? Are we not their enemies? If we had a choice, we too would have stopped their grain and water" (*Mottled Dawn* 106).

This exchange underscoring the age old adage that everything is fair in love and war, unmistakably indicates a collapsing of the fixed positionality of India as the vindictive *other* and Pakistan as the vulnerable victim, validated by mythology. Following his interaction with the villagers, when Karimdad returns home he is greeted by the happy news that his pregnant wife has given birth to a son. Delighted and overjoyed, Karimdad names his child Yazid. When his consternated wife asks him how he could defile his child by naming him after a tyrant, Karimdad replies, "It's just a name; it's not necessary that he too will be the same Yazid…that Yazid shut the river water; this one will let the waters flow again," (*Mottled Dawn* 108). His intention of destabilizing the category of an enemy can be regarded as a subaltern's gesture of alternating the essential historical narrative that reinforces nationalist intolerance and "naturalize[s] preexisting notions of fundamentally opposed Hindu, Sikh and Muslim communities" by a constant "retailing [sic] of tales of sacrifice and war,"(Pandey 176). With the invocation of Yazid as Karimdad's son, as opposed to the archetypical enemy of Islam, Manto performs the difficult task of decolonizing the mind. Commenting on the story, Ayesha Jalal says it "reminds us that the archetypical villain not only resides in all of us but, with a measure of empathy, can also dissolve differences with the other to become the ultimate purveyor of peace,"(Jalal 206). The story aims at a resignification of baby Yazid and an eradication of his subject from his conventional symbolical parallel in Muslim cultural history.

Conclusion

Critiquing the normative discourse of exclusionary politics, Manto's texts direct their attention to the exploration of the feelings of confusion and uncertainty in his characters as an interventional strategy to the politics of differentiation. The three representative short stories critically read in the paper are unequivocal documentary evidences of the testing time of the Partition. But, apart from

that, what strikes them as singular is their tendency to subvert the homogenizing trend of historical narration. While "Toba Tek Singh" questions the ideas of home and nation, the farcical nature of national boundaries, "The Last Salute" questions the efficacy of inter-communal violence and the notion of patriotism by presenting the historical antagonists as mirror reflections of one another and "Yazid" challenges the *essentializing* social conventions that easily *otherize* the enemy merely on face value. By taking a cue from Ferdinand de Saussure's semiology, the paper has attempted to examine Manto's texts as principally delineating the socially motivated, arbitrary relationship between the signifier and the signified, the sign and its meaning. It has shown how Manto's short stories deny contingent national belonging, defy the politics of cartographic negotiation and re-examine the history of Partition from the point of view of the residents of the borders and the boundaries of the society— the subalterns. Manto's writings engage in an iconoclastic disruption of traditional and contemporary approaches to religious identity and offer the reader an outlet to reexamine a history of an essential seminal moment in the subcontinent that still informs psychosomatics of its residents even after several decades of the Partition of 1947. The paper reads Manto through the lens of Saussure's structuralism but attempts to go beyond the parameters of Structuralism because Manto and his work cannot be restricted to boundaries, academic or otherwise.

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Role of Intuitive Awareness in Exploring *The Thousand Faces of Night*

Jitender Singh

One starts making use of words to change something around; more precisely, to convey that one is not adaptive to the surrounding in one sense or the other. If there is an acceptance of whatever is in the surrounding, there is no need to convey the bliss in words. This can better be done either through sound or silence. When writing was invented centuries ago, it was kept in mind that word must be followed and preceded by space; and for that matter language appears to be a combination of sounds and silences existing at the same time in alternate positions. "For some people this arises as the sound of silence, or simply a quiet or empty mind" (Sumedho *Intuitive Awareness* 1). When one begins to observe language and for that matter words with such keen insight, they become a beautiful sight for realizing their intuitive aspect shrouded by their intellectual persona. It is on this space perhaps that violence enters a word and makes it manipulative. On the other hand, "From this place of spaciousness, social and personal conditioning can be investigated or reflected upon, thus freeing the heart from the delusion of identifying with the personality" (1). To substantiate these observations, it should be made clear that in writing, every space and every pause count for it is where the intuitive writer leaves the force of the argument. What is being spoken is reduced to a mere shadow of what has been buried in between the words. Language loves to hide the essence while delivering the existence. What exists in graphical form is a trace of presence which is present in its absent form. Thus it becomes very interesting to see how intuitive awareness is evoked in the process of interpretation.

It is where the need of going deeper into intuition is felt. Now that the understanding of language has changed, how literature should be interpreted is also in question. The answer begins with the assumption that literature is one form of writing. A poem or a story or any piece of literature is a structure of traces. Traces are invisible marks. Nobody is sure what these marks are. But surely they are there. "Criticism, which is basically an inquiry into a word, a

line, a text, or anything that moves the mind from the point of perception to the realms of inquiry with an ulterior motive to interpret it, begins with the suspicion, a suspicion based on a conviction" (Ravindran 76). The critic suspects the appearance of a sign because he has a conviction that it is not what it appears to be. The conviction is that it is something else. Then the inquiry begins. Criticism is the story of many such inquiries. Humans are never content with things as they are. They want to inquire into them, go beyond them to discover their secrets because they feel that something is missing or something is absent from what they perceive.

When a string of words is read, it does not simply evoke the meaning rather the sounds of those words enter within the intuitive energy of the reader and an understanding takes place in total silence inside the heart of the individual that is detected by the mind and is brought to the notice of the self. This entire process takes place under the energy called intuitive awareness. In this context, Ajahn Sumedho remarks:

> The phrase 'intuitive awareness' is a translation of *satisampajañña*. The quality of *sati-sampajañña* is part of a continuum of three elements. The first element is *sati*, the raw, mindful cognizance of an object. The second element being *sati-sampajañña*, referring to the mindful, intuitive awareness of an object within its context; the final element is '*sati-paññâ*' – usually translated as 'mindfulness and wisdom'– which refers to the appreciation of an object in respect to its essential nature as transitory, unsatisfactory, and not-self. (*The Sound of Silence* 3)

In doing so, the reader endeavours to clarify and expand the common renderings of 'clear comprehension' or even 'self-awareness'. His chief concern is that normal reading does not give a sense of the true broadness of that clarity. Thus he experiments with an expression that conveys a deliberately expansive quality and that includes the element of mystery; for it is important for the English wording also to imply an attunement of the heart to experience that the thinking mind cannot fully understand. The word 'intuitive' is used because it perfectly conveys the mixture of a genuine apprehension of reality, yet also that the reason 'why things are the way they are' might not be at all apparent.

In contemplating right understanding, it must be emphasized to see it as an intuitive understanding and not a conceptual one. It would be very helpful to contemplate the difference between analytical thinking and intuitive awareness. There is a huge difference between the use of the mind to think, analyze, reason, criticize, and to have ideas, perceptions, views and opinions, and intuitive awareness which is non-critical. Intuitive awareness is an inclusive awareness. It's not that it doesn't allow criticism; rather, it sees the critical mind as an object. Some critics may find this approach frustrating because it is easier to be told what a word exactly means rather than trying to comprehend what does the sound of that particular word evoke in a human heart. It is obvious because intuitive awareness is frustrating to an analytical person whose faith is in thought, reason, and logic. Awareness is right now. It is not a matter of thinking about it, but being aware of thinking about it. Moreover, intuition also knows the limits of words, what they can convey. It is not just willfully making them do anything or mean anything that according to your ideas or ideals. The sanctity of the word can be damaged quite badly through tyrannically forcing it to do something, to mean something. Yet intuitive sound of a word includes its limitations, its disabilities, its sicknesses as well as its health and its pleasures.

With the intellect, with the reasoning mind, we want clarity; we want answers to questions, solutions to problems. There is desire to know 'what should I do first?' and searching that answer we approach literature and strongly wish that it should supply what is needed for us. But words do not supply answers yet they evoke a stimulation which can make you think and find answers for yourself. The understanding takes place not between you and words that you just read but inside your intuitive self. Words can only act as the medium to generate meaning or solution in your own intuitive mind. They don't carry the truth in themselves. They are mere fabrications, uncertain, doubtful – simply because they are also the part of the material world, thus not fixed, stable and eternal. So, that puts the onus back on to you to trust your intuitive sense rather than always be doubting, wanting the word to tell you, or wanting to follow instructions – which all are quite conditioned to do. Instead you open to the sense of uncertainty, insecurity, or confusion inherent in words and must build up your faith in your own intuition to interpret the world for you.

Consciousness is like a mirror; it reflects not only meaningful things, ideas or expressions but meaningless, ordinary and common reality as well. If a mirror is really analyzed, it reflects whatever – the space, the objects, and the neutrality, everything that is in front of it. Usually our attention is pinned at outstanding ones, the extreme of meaningful or meaningless. We do not look at the obvious but recognize the subtleties behind the extremes of meaningful idea or meaningless expressions. But an intuitive awareness of a text is like a subtlety behind everything that we awaken to, because we do not notice it usually if we are seeking the extremes. And that is what is being practised these days. Whenever a literary work is produced, we try to fit it in one or the other critical framework related to only one aspect of human experience. It appears to be a very limited approach to reduce a literary piece to the level of an object which can get fit into a single theoretical frame. Owing to this reason, modern literary theories are taken to be the sole interpretative methods to deliver the truth inherent in a text. What Ajahn Sumedho writes seems apt in this context:

> These are ideals; positions that we might take. They are the 'true but not right; right but not true' predicament that we create with our dualistic mind; not that they're wrong. In George Orwell's novel *Animal Farm* there is a slogan: "Everyone is equal but some are more equal than others". In the conditioned realm, this is how we think. We all think all human beings are equal, ideally. All human beings are equal, but with the practicalities of life, some are more equal than others. (*Intuitive Awareness* 33).

Thus, the real method to evaluate literature is to be mindful of everything that a text contains without tearing it off into important extremes. The sole criteria of it being literary should be above the extent to which it contributes in evoking intuitive awareness in the reader.

To substantiate these observations, an in-depth study of Githa Hariharan's *The Thousand Faces of Night* is conducted to reveal a new understanding based on the principle of intuitive awareness. There are many instances where language ceases to influence the course of the narrative but through silence intuitive energy works.

The title of the novel appears to be a solid gateway to step inside the

underlying intuitive spirit of this novel. It deals with the latent dimensions related to woman and her true self. With this title, the novel launches a plea that woman should be careful before asking a question, the 'night' has thousand faces. It might be very difficult to figure out which face resembles yours or which one is meant for you to wear. In this multiplicity of identities, the claims to the validity of being a fixed entity are rendered unfixed, unstable and fluid in the presence of her mythical representatives. Moreover, the characterization of novel also very strongly raises the claim that the names of the characters hint towards the depth of Hariharan's vision. It seems the names given to all the main characters have been contrived to signify an intuitive course of events which is generally left unexplored in the wake of material consciousness. No other name can be apt for the mother than Sita who is a mythical representative of the daughter of Mother Earth. In her individual form Sita is considered born out of Mother Earth who becomes the spouse of Lord Ram. But in its universal form, Sita is thought to be the incarnation of goddess Laxmi, the mother of the universe itself. She is the source of Shakti, the power through which Narayan, the ultimate God, runs the course of events in the universe. Thus, Sita becomes the emblem of both 'mother' and 'daughter' and also the power that cannot be defined through these social roles. Moreover, the ultimate role of the goddess is to recreate herself in a new form so that the channel of power does not cease to deliver life and its sustenance in the world. Kamala Ganesh remarks:

> The mother goddess can be interpreted as expressing ideas of power, autonomy and primacy in the widest sense of the term. She conveys not so much the idea of physical motherhood but a world-view in which the creative power of femininity is central; the goddess mediates between life and death, and contains in herself the possibility of regeneration. (74)

Therefore, Sita, the emblem of the supreme energy, gives birth to Devi who in the course of life transcends the limits of human perception by realizing her intuitive self. Thus, the protagonist of this novel is named Devi who represents every woman as being the source of self-realization. In her journey of self-discovery, she becomes the reservoir of faith, piety and goodness in the world. The general way of the world is to couple Shakti with Shiva, Devi with Mahesh

to maintain the cycle of life and death, of re-creation. Married to Mahesh, Devi analyses her potential to create life, maintain and sustain it. But after years of her devotion to this role of a consort, Devi needs to complete the cycle of her material existence by travelling back to Gopal, the ultimate masculine principle. It is in this union that her weakness gets transformed into strength, vulnerability into courage, and her material attributes into spiritual energy. And finally in order to begin a new cycle of life, Devi goes back to her source, the divine goddess – Mother Earth, Sita. Thus, this is the spiritual journey that the woman undertakes beyond her social roles by developing her consciousness of the divine origin she is the significant part of.

To express her intuitive understanding of women, Githa Hariharan has constructed a plot with parallel characters in material life. “Sita, Devi’s mother, in fact fits the ideal description of womanhood. Sita, as her name signifies is symbolic of an ideal wife, mother and daughter-in-law” (Kothari 44). Thus her identity is in a constant flux. She calls back Devi after the completion of her education. Her mother’s letters carry the message to Devi that she needs to be with her. Sita silently conveys what is the need of the time. Here the narrative remains muted and through the language of silence Sita’s message is conveyed to Devi. There is no mention of the content of her letters neither there is any description about them. Letters thus function as silent vehicles of communication of a significant order.

However Devi, conscious of her intuitive energy, is not able to relate to the marriage proposals which demand something else other than her original self. This resisting spirit of her origin and noble existence was kindled in Devi during her girlhood by her grandmother. She was fed on the mythical stories of the intuitive feminine principle behind life that protects the fragile layers of human existence through the devotion of Damayanti, anger of Gandhari, revenge and penance of Amba. Therefore even after years of separation from the grandmother and the motherland, Devi cannot forget the impressions of this childhood overture into the world of gods and goddesses. And this makes her a non-conformist to the ways of the world around her. “Above all, she felt a piercing ache to see her mother. But equally powerful was a nameless dread she only partly

acknowledged: the dread of the familiar love, stifling and all-pervasive; of a world beyond her classroom and laboratory, charged with a more pungent uncertainty" (Hariharan 7).

While exploring the intuitive aspect of the text it seems that Hariharan's vision is not confined merely to present the hierarchically conscious social roles performed by women but she has also placed women on equal footings to show that they primarily exist for the sustenance of their creative feminine principle. The narrator informs, "My mother and I live alone in the house by the sea. Our rooms, with identical windows over-looking the beach, are next to each other" (Hariharan 12). Thus there exists no hierarchy either as 'mother' or 'daughter' but a common responsibility of their salvation and transcendence which has never been revealed to them by patriarchy. Sita waits for Devi with an eagerness to initiate her into a new phase of life. This eminent stage demands various things that need to be inculcated in her before Devi walks on the thorny ground of wifehood. To cater to the demands of this emanating phase, Sita constructs a safe haven for Devi and brings her closer to herself. "In this fortress that shuts out the rest of the world, I grope towards her, and she weaves a cocoon, a secure womb that sucks me in and holds me fast to its thick, sticky walls" (13). As Devi approaches Sita, the closeness between them opens gates for new vistas of womanhood where she is kept in bounds of her disciplined virtuosity so that the originality of self can be protected under the layers of social roles. "There was the initial awkwardness of seeing Amma – unchanged, every hair in place, cool and poised in a silk sari in spite of the sweltering heat. But she was also different; not changed, but less distant, more vulnerable, than the image of her I had carried about with me in America" (13). The need of language is not felt. They feel a deep connection between them by mounting on the boat of intuition. Love between them is not the sole ingredient of integration rather their mutual presence makes the flow of understanding a gradual process of assimilation. Devi silently learns the wisdom that Sita has preserved for her from years of solitude. "Amma and I did not touch each other and we certainly did not talk about love, for each other or anyone else. But in first few weeks after my return to Madras, we were intensely conscious of each other; we were pulled together by a tender protectiveness that encircled our neck with its fine threads" (13). All these years of Sita which have been spent in loneliness

help her to meditate over Devi's future and she carves out some useful strategies to launch Devi on the pedestal of womanhood. The future consequences and its eminent challenges occupy major portion of her consciousness. To make Devi conscious of her intuitive energy, Sita wishes her to focus on the coming events of her life. Any reference to her life in America is like visiting an old mansion that Devi does not need to inhabit any longer. Devi wistfully remembers:

> I had begun to tell her about America. She smiled gently and said, 'All that is over now. The important thing is that you are back, you are now in Madras. Why go over an old story again?' I had not felt rebuffed then; I had, in fact, been a little flattered that we could speak adult to adult, and that I must have some secrets of my own. (13)

Hariharan reinterprets the archetypes of mother and daughter from the perspective of feminist sisterhood as: "It is the love of mother that restores in the protagonist a rekindled desire in life. It is the gift of music that the mother eventually learns to give to her daughter that symbolizes this new language" (Kothari 44). Hence, the intuitive call of Sita enveloped in her letters is so strong that it reaches directly to Devi across oceans and distant lands. Her words are not intellectually forced but emotionally charged with the need of companionship that their relation needs at the moment of its next flight to maturity. Each word seems enchanted enough to carry the enigma of Sita's dwelling presence in Devi's life: "But Amma's letters brought with them an unspoken message of loneliness, poignant in its quiet dignity. She has always been a strong, self-willed woman; in my moments of anger I have thought her selfish. But the image of her alone by the sea teased me like a magnet" (Hariharan 16). It seems as if Sita in her moments of solitude practises the art of linking her energy to that of Devi. Her unspoken words reverberate with the intensity of their emotional union. And Devi too, through her female inheritance, does not miss their vibration and notices the craving for strength that the part of Sita could supply to her. The real understanding that takes place in Devi's consciousness is an outcome of the unspoken words, the silent whispers which one soul receives from another. There is no show of being weak or

forceful except a silent invitation of union that one heart transmits to the other of its own kind. Devi asserts:

> I heard the low, modulated voice, at once commanding and coaxing. I never dreamt of her as I did of my father, craving for a means to get closer to him. But she was always our anchor-rock, never wrong, never to be questioned, a self-evident fact of our existence. That she might need me, my hesitant, self-doubting presence, was intoxicating. (16)

Devi has lived a life of ignorance and innocence during her childhood. Her grandmother holds the strings of the horses of Devi's imagination and lets her fly through the ancient pictures of raging womanhood and its glory. The innocent mind receives these bouts of intoxicating womanhood as an expression of her adult self. The gap between the mythical and the real womanhood is merged the moment Devi finds an old photo of Sita: "Amma did not look like herself. Her eyes had a vague, dreamy look about them, softening the chin that already jutted out a little, like a portent of her later determination. What surprised me even more was that she held a veena in her hands, her fingers caressing the strings" (Hariharan 27). To make Devi understand what has happened to Sita's veena, her grandmother refers to the story of Gandhari. Here again the narrative remains muted. The connection between Sita's giving up her veena and Gandhari's anger is developed not through the use of words but through silence in the consciousness of the character and the reader. The link that Devi discovers between her mother's giving up of her veena and Gandhari's giving up of her eye-sight leads her to the realization that the emotion of anger is also a means of transcendence from material bounds: "Divine anger provides those twists and turns in mortal destinies that make heroism possible. The lesson that was more difficult to digest was human anger: that it could seep into every pore of a womanly body and become the very bloodstream of her life" (Hariharan 29). This lesson brings Devi closer to her adulthood. From the story of Amba she learns the role of revenge and penance in the upliftment of a woman's life. And Devi thinks it to be her time to respond to her grandmother's years of over-rich, unadulterated nourishment with a story of her own. It becomes difficult for her to only hear the stories of the womanhood she would soon grow into without marking her own presence

on to that fantastic canvas. Devi reveals, “I lived a secret life of my own: I became a woman warrior, a heroine. I was Devi. I rode a tiger, and cut off evil, magical demons’ heads” (Hariharan 41).

Devi begins to explore the bliss of wifehood with Mahesh but soon realizes that this is not the end she is meant for. Baba’s stories try to inculcate an unflinching devotion to husband ignoring the secrets of womanhood: “The woman has no independent sacrifice to perform, no vow, no fasting, by serving her husband, she is honoured in the heavens” (Hariharan 55). But the next stage of learning is marked by the revelation of the life-choices of Devi’s mother-in-law. Mayamma, the maid servant, relates the story of Parvatiamma to Devi, how she in search of enlightenment left the house and marched towards her journey of self-discovery. Mayamma tells that Parvatiamma had been an ambitious woman. In search of God, she stripped herself of the life of a householder. Devi says, “I kept her photograph in my room. Every morning I woke up to see that face, severe but glowing, look down on me like a guardian angel, a mother unseen” (64). Thus from her Devi derives the lesson of renunciation. Bhasha Shukla Sharma holds the view, “Her decision of not having children, by not trying continuously and ‘hysterically’ to conceive, symbolizes her search for self. Inspired by her mother-in-law who left her husband’s house to lead a religious life, she also leaves her husband’s house with Gopal” (569). She is sure that in order to search her spiritual roots, she also needs to leave behind the world of mundane engagements. In Rama Nair’s words, “Devi’s self-fulfillment does not lie in bearing and rearing of children, but in recognizing her own inherent potential to live with herself on more positive terms” (174).

Moreover, the name Gopal invokes the image of Lord Krishna – the god of love, the divine flute player and the reservoir of all the nine rasas. Devi, like an innocent child, lets herself flow into the stream of his musical voice which offers her an escape into her original self. “The irresistible music of Gopal is a symbolic call for confrontation of oneself” (Paul 99). The appeal of his music unmistakably reaches the core of her soul and touches the very fabric of its spiritual outfit. She floats in his enchanted company, “I am no one, she thought, as she was swept along in the rich current of Gopal’s voice, I have no husband or lover, only this blissful

anonymity in the darkness, filled with a raga that reaches higher and higher, beyond the earth-bound demands of passion" (Hariharan 128-129). In the aura of his musical voice, all the distinctions of being mother, daughter or wife get blurred and Devi is able to transcend the boundary of her socio-cultural self in the wake of her awakened intuitive self. Rama Nair remarks, "Unlike Mayamma, she [Devi] liberates herself from the pressures of feminine role-play, to attain a state of free creative individuality" (173). Moreover, this use of music as a means of transcendence makes Devi ponder over her female linkage, "She thought of the three of them, Mayamma, Sita and herself. Three of the women who walked a tightrope and struggled for some balance; for some means of survival they could fashion for themselves" (135). Her awareness to be a part of a deep glorious feminine lineage helps Devi realize her place in the growth of womanhood. In the journey of constituting her selfhood, she has lived through the lives of all those mythical women from history who blow up the tradition and fashion their own fate. "She could live again through Parvatiamma, even through Devi. They were not strangers to her, strange as their choices may have been" (136).

Thus, without being conscious of the power of words, these women characters focus their energy on the intuitive locus of their common selves and explore the innate strength of will power that nature has bestowed them with. Devi's trials as a daughter, daughter-in-law, wife and a consort have prepared her for an unwavering faith in her own womanhood. "After a brief spell of passionate involvement, Devi is alert to her inner call" (Paul 99). Now she is ready to return to her mother presenting herself as a tribute to her female inheritance. Hariharan writes, "She rehearsed in her mind the words, the unflinching look she had to meet Sita with to offer her her love. To stay and fight, to make sense of it all, she would have to start from the very beginning" (139).

Thus, by invoking Ajahn Sumedho's ideas on intuitive awareness it is found that a woman's condition can get transformed if she focuses on her inner energies that are common to all the women of the world. As far as the narrative of this novel is concerned, it clearly reveals that the deep understanding takes place in the intuitive self of characters and the readers as well. It seems that the novel is an outcome of a deep meditation on the

silent aspects of woman's personality. The ultimate solution that the novel propounds is to make women more intuitive towards themselves. Otherwise, what Nancy Friday remarks stands true: "It can take generations to change the unconscious ways in which we think about ourselves" (xv).

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Negotiating the Impulses of Cyber/Eco- Queer in the Japanese Sci-Fi Anime: The Scope of Technology *vis-à-vis* Gendered Identity

Ananya Saha

Donna Haraway unhesitatingly voiced her preference towards the cyborg over the goddess in her *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (1991). Since then, the figure of the cyborg has imaginably mutated and proliferated, courtesy the prospering multimedial conception. The 'cyborg' is perhaps neither redundantly fantastical, nor situated in a post-binary utopia. The idea sounds apparently improbable, given the near- consistent appearanceof the cyborg in science fiction texts which are primarily futuristic, whether post-apocalyptic or steam punk. Japanese science-fiction manga and anime from the second half of the twentieth century are peppered with plotlines which narrates tales of survival in a post-apocalyptic society. The impulse is fathomable, given Japan faced the mortal threat of nuclear annihilation during the World War II. Curiously, the cyborg figure decisively populates such texts as key characters. Further nuance is added to the idea when one takes into account, the layered queer tendencies of these (quasi) human figures, which are often normatively female.

In this paper, three such anime texts are taken into consideration for analysis of the interface between two seemingly opposed compulsions; the technophobic eco-feminism and the technophilic cyber-feminism. The first text is a film directed by Hayao Miyazaki, tilted *Kaze no Tani no Naushika* or*Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (1984). The second is another film titled *Kôkaku Kidotai* or *Ghost in the Shell* (1995), directed by Mamoru Oshii, and based on the manga created by Masamune Shirow. The final text is an anime seriesentitled *Chikou Shoujo Arjuna* or *Earth Maiden Arjuna* (2001), directed by Shoji Kawamori. In all of these, the protagonists are adolescents or young adult 'females', whether a human, or a cyborg. I endeavor to explore how their normative identities are queered with the aid of technology over the course of the text, and the ramifications they tend to offer. The queering occurs at various echelons: (i) The mode of the deployment of technology, (ii) the intuitive modus

operandi of the lead, which necessitates the use of technology, (iii) the role that technology plays in the deliverance of the ontic 'female' being unto a supposed post-human plane, and (iv) the contribution of the male creators in the polemics of the eco-feminism is-à-this cyber-feminism dialogue.

Through the (con)-textual exploration aided by these four parameters, I would veer the discussion that focuses on the following questions:

(i) Is the queered deliverance of the essentialised being; a human or a cyborg, necessarily post- human?

(ii) Is the queering, whether post- human or not, a result of a choice exercised?

(iii) In the dialogue between the technophobic and the technophoric, how is the ubiquitousness of technology negotiated with?

Kumiko Sato comments on how the nature of Japanese cyber (punk) feminism is influenced by the idea of *nihonjiron* in her essay titled "How Information Technology Has (Not) Changed Feminism and Japanism: Cyberpunk in the Japanese Context" (Sato 336). *Nihonjinron* is the generic name given to an interdisciplinary corpus of discourse that evolved after the World War II in Japan, informs Peter N. Dale in the introduction to *The Myth of Japanese Uniqueness*. To be precise, it concentrates on the idea of the formation of Japanese national and cultural identity in differentiation to that of the West. One might perceive it as a means to counter the overwhelming influence of America, which was lauded in the occupation era. In both *Nausicaä* and *Arjuna*, the supposed ecofeminist impulse crystallizes the urge of a hearkening back to the past; whether in a historic-mythical approach or in a steam punk fashion. Tangibly conceived as a way to confront the upsurge of the present techno-euphoria that might bring about an apocalypse, the omnipresent agency of nature is summoned. While in the works of someone like Osamu Tezuka, the devastation unleashed by the War is depicted through hyper-realistic and graphic representation; in the cyberpunk texts, there is a detectable instinct to sublimate the devastating memories through nostalgic fantasia. The half-forgotten folktales, country wisdom, the urge to consort with nature et al are celebrated in the filmography of Hayao Miyazaki. Often, for Miyazaki, the protagonist who delivers human society from the clutches of schizophrenic technocracy unto its salvation is a woman. Sato writes:

> Japanese cyberpunk is a symptom of the struggle with its duality, between subject and Other, West and Japan, science and occult, as well as machine and human organism. It aims toward the synthesis of the two in the rhetoric of cyberpunk, which also serves as the rhetoric of Japanese uniqueness in the modern formation of subjectivity. (353)

With the linear flow of time and projection of a futuristic vision which might not be consummately hopeful; these texts simultaneously commit to a regressive motion which subsumes the 'reclamation of nature' agenda. Within this context of bifurcated nebulous impulses, the protagonist executes her mission to counter hyper technocracy, a mission that might be deemed eco-feminist in principle.Herein, the scope can be further problematized. Early ecofeminism displays a tendency to homogenize female identity by inherently equating the oppression of women to the overall debilitation of nature, a tendency not welcomed by many. Comparatively, radical ecofeminism, which advocates an assimilation of multiplicities, or a 'chain of equivalence', as Catriona Sandilands suggests in *The Good Natured feminist: Ecofeminist and the Quest for Democracy* might be more acceptable. (Sandilands 86) The idea of a 'female' is an elusive one, which Haraway is suggests in her manifesto. The ontic category by herself is flexible with inherent possibilities of queerness; which Luce Irigaray mentions in the seminal "This Sex which is Not One" in 1980. Herein, the palimpsest of the cyborg upon the womanin these texts queers the ontological boundaries even further. The breach is not merely between human and machine; but also between the gendered pigeonholes of heteronormative identity. How the role of technology becomes apparently counterintuitive, yet not counterproductive is unpacked hereafter.

Goddess Reimagined: Nausicaä

Nausicaä is a young girl who attempts to protect the *Valley of the Wind* from the clutches of the 'poisonous jungle', where cyclopean, mutated, monstrous creatures named 'ohms'/'ohmus' inhabit. The setting is post-apocalyptic, a thousand years after the previous world was annihilated. Mankind's belligerence has poisoned nature against their own kind. In this steam punk narrative, remaining humans have reverted to a feudal social structure. Nausicaä is the

daughter of the sovereign by birth and the protector of the community. It is unclear as to how the role of the guardian befalls her. But she protects human and nature alike, unafraid of the jungle. It can be presumed that being the daughter of a benevolent sovereign, she has assigned herself with the responsibility. But unlike her father, she is tolerant towards the gigantic ohms. She could be the archetypal mother guardian that the conventional ecofeminist dotes on. Nausicaä has befriended the toxic jungle and secretly tends an organic garden of detoxified saplings. The valley is blessed with the purifying ocean air. She maneuvers a glider, as if it is an integral part of her being which is synchronous with the steam punk mode. The glider is the first technical aid that initiates the elaborate nexus of queering. Timothy Leary in "The Cyberpunk: The Individual as Reality Pilot" discusses the etymological root of the word 'cyber';

The word cybernetics comes from the Greek word *kubernetes* – pilot. The Hellenic origin of this word is important in that it reflects Greek traditions of independence and individual self- reliance […] the Athenian cyberpunk, the pilot, made his or her own navigational decisions. (254)

Miyazaki's Nausicaä is the self-reliant pilot who chooses to protect the two antagonists of a long drawn battle. Yet when it comes to her mission, she does not suffer from a presumable technophobia. Her eco-friendly glider does not only fly on wind currents; but is also equipped with a sophisticated jet launcher. Neither does she shy away from excavating the unbreakable shells from the dead ohms for weapons, albeit in self-defense. In one corporeal body, she is the nostalgic mother goddess as well as the female cybernaut. But the queering per excellence of her normative self occurs at the climax of the film, as the second apocalypse approaches. In its wake, Nausicaä fulfills a prophecy about a Messianic male warrior in blue, walking on the 'fields of gold'. She injures herself fatally in the process of protecting the jungle which her fellow humans have committed an arson. The dying Nausicaä is healed by the ohms that connect with her body through golden conduits to channelize life force. The ducts resemble medical apparatus which is used for fluid transfusion. In a sense, the outrageous by- products of technology resuscitates Nausicaä who becomes one with the ohms. She is rejuvenated in a new avatar, magically clad in blue, gliding on the golden prosthetics, becoming the 'male' messiah from the prophecy. But her corporeal body is still that of an adult young female.

The catalyst of her identity is unchanged. She is still the guardian, only now superimposed on the male figure of the redeemer. The idea reiterates the ambivalence associated with the 'woman' who refuses to be limited by a single definition or the unitary principle of identity. Haraway suggests;

With the hard-won recognition of their social and historical constitution, gender, race, and class cannot provide the basis for a belief in "essential" unity. There is nothing about being "female" that naturally binds women. (Haraway 17).

Goddess Pulverized: Kusanagi

The next film, *Kôkaku Kidotai* or *Ghost in the Shell* serves to further complicate the issue at hand. In a futuristic, pre-apocalyptic world, the lead is one Major Motoko Kusanagi, a trained assassin at the intelligence bureau, who happens to be a cyborg. The setting is futuristic as the opening lines of the film relay, 'In the near future - corporate networks reach out to the stars, electrons and light flow throughout the universe. The advance of computerization, however, has not yet wiped out nations and ethnic groups.' (Oshii) She is 'born in the net' and the opening credits show her highly refined birthing procedure, far removed from the organic conception and delivery. Motoko is an android who operates on artificial intelligence, yet her body is designed upon the model of a generic young woman. She seems unaware of her own sexuality and unabashedly displays her nude form in the film. Sergeant Batou, her part android colleague sees her as a sexualized female and keeps covering her body with his coat at every possible opportunity. The breach in ontic entities herein is instrumented by technology sansthe ecological impetus. The queer is inherent within the cyborg as Haraway claims that, "it is oppositional, utopian and completely without innocence(7)." For Kusanagi, this statement holds partially true. Her queernessis further crystallized when the schizophrenic cyborg questions her own reality by calling forth her 'ghost', or soul. During the final stage of her birthing process, Kusanagi is shown to emerge from the surface of a fluid; similar to the water breaking in the womb. Though the text does not exhibit a pronounced ecofeminist impulse, water is a recurrent image in the film. The protagonist is fond of diving, which is dangerous for her synthetic body. When asked by Batou about her unorthodox hobby, she says that diving is her private search for hope. Kusanagi is a cyborg infused with a 'ghost'/soul/consciousness (can be used

interchangeably in the context of the film) which makes her capable of more than just mechanical/artificial intelligence. She says in the film;

There are countless ingredients that make up the human body and mind, like all the components that make up me as an individual with my own personality. Sure, I have a face and voice to distinguish myself from others, but my thoughts and memories are unique only to me, and I carry a sense of my own destiny […] I feel confined; only free to expand myself within boundaries. (Oshii).

Her empathy towards human emotions leads her down a spiral of self-doubt, wherein she begins to suspect the reality of her own memories which she had considered unique. The film features the idea of false memories beingimplanted within human brains by a clandestine hacker, 'the master puppeteer'. His existence is elusive, disembodied; neither human nor cyborg. He is shown to inhabit both male and female, human and cyborg bodies as per his convenience, yet always speaking with a man's voice. He claims himself to be a sentient, intelligent, life form; who wants Kusanagi as his perfect 'other', and with whom he wishes to merge and achieve the final transcendence into the 'higher structure' as he calls it. This is how their conversation proceeds in the climax, after Kusanagi willingly dives into the mind of the 'puppeteer';

- Puppeteer: […] I refer to myself as an intelligent life-form, because I am sentient […] but in my present state, I am still incomplete. I lack the most basic life processes inherent in all living organisms, reproducing and dying.
- Motoko: But you can copy yourself.
- Puppeteer: A copy is just an identical image. There is the possibility that a single virus could destroy an entire set of systems, and copies do not give rise to variety and originality. […] I want us to merge.
- Motoko: Huh? Merge?
- Puppeteer: A unification. […] We will both undergo change, but there is nothing for either of us to lose […] The time has come to cast aside these bonds and to elevate our consciousness to a higher plane.(Oshii)

Although a synthetic, Kusanagi seems apprehensive of death and the loss of her own unique identity. Though she suggests a copy to the puppeteer, she herself does not want to be merely duplicated as her own 'ghost' is sacrosanct to her. Kusanagi wants to dive into the puppeteer's mind of her own accord,

"being paranoiac of her existence" as she puts it. But she is not allowed to make a choice in favor or against the final culmination of the two existences. The puppeteer, through the agency of another female cyborg body, forces himself on her consciousness and creates a superimposed self; which is a "part of the higher structure" as he claims, terminating her previous existence which was akin to innocence. And herein Kusanagi differs from Haraway's claim; that the cyborg is omniscient, without the hint of innocence. Kusanagi is not innocent in the moral sense of the term. She is a trained killer. But the puppeteer compels her to engage in the act of a psychic consummation and makes her traverse a territory which is a part of the vast unknown network. She is no messiah entrusted with the responsibility to solve the metaphysical questions of existence for either human or cyborg.That the sequel to this film is titled *Innocence* (2004), where 'sexaroid' cyborg dolls are infused with 'ghosts' stolen from human female children, further complicates the questions of queerness and choice. Most interestingly, the film also features a scientist whom others address as 'Haraway', without a gendered honorific. It seems that the scientist, who appears to be female is a human. But later she is shown to use cyborg ocular enhancement. Hence the audience remains unsure about her corporeal identity.

Goddess Consummated: Juna

The final text, *Earth Maiden Arjuna* (2001) features Juna Ariyoshi, a high school girl of sixteen who is entrusted with the responsibility to protect the dying earth. The setting is present day Japan, but the vision is fictional, where Japan awaits an apocalypse unaware. As Juna lies dying from a road accident which she suffers from while biking with her boyfriend Tokio, she encounters an out- of body experience wherein she meets someone named Chris. Identifying Chris with Krishna from the Indian epic *Mahabharata*, the one who charioteers the warrior Arjuna on to action, might not be far-fetched. In Japanese, the Christianate spelling of Chris may not be sacrosanct, and the name can indeed be orthographically represented as 'Kris' instead, to make the connection even more pronounced. Either way, the name written in the katakana script used for foreign words would read as *Kurisu*. Manipulating Juna, Chris barters the promise of returning her to life if she agrees to become the guardian of the dying earth against the *raja*(s), the mutant demons that have been created out of the irresponsible action of humans towards nature. *Raja* is one of the

three basic human propensities or *guna*-s, and in Sanskrit means the propensity of human beings towards material accretion, which is exactly the malady afflicting earth. The affinity towards excess in terms of materiality, the desire to over consume is exhibited through a substantial rendition. The earth is nauseous and suffocated, from the accumulation of the non-bio degradable waste that is produced daily, owing to irresponsible ingestion. Juna is compelled to take up the responsibility of being the 'avatar of time', known as *Arjuna*. He is a male hero of epical proportions from the *Mahabharata*. Her real name is Ariyoshi Juna, which can be shortened to 'Ar-juna'.

Juna is a human girl who adopts the persona of a male hero from a foreign culture and wields the *gandiva*, presumably named after the bow that Arjuna used in the *Mahabharata*. But when she transforms from Juna to the 'avatar of time', the body remains normatively gendered- the body of a young female in a skinny pink bodysuit. The queering herein is tiered. First of all, ecofeminism has majorly advocated green peace.But Juna's method to achieve a peaceful end is not entirely non-violent. There is a double- entendre in action. Juna's primary weapon is a bow, which happens to be a pre- industrial armament. It harnesses the energy of the earth to create arrows. The other major deterrent that Juna possesses is a *Jomonic magatama* bead on her forehead,which generates 'earth sympathy waves'. The comma shaped magatama beads were popular during the ancient *Jomon* period in Japan, as a symbol of good fortune (Harris 112). But, the third weapon that Juna is bestowed with is the *ashura*, a herculean cyborg that is summoned by the avatar from the recesses of her consciousness when she is unable to counter the *raja*(s) by herself, thus resorting to committing technophilia. In the Indian mythological narratives, an *ashura* is a demon who usually embodies vice. However, Juna's warrior *ashura* is concomitant to the Messianic project. An audience familiar with the *Mahabharata* cannot help but recognize the echo of the queer relationship between Krishna and Arjuna in that of Chris and Juna. Juna is the defender of peaceful coexistence and has to become one with the target or the *raja*in the end, fulfilling her final purpose, wherein the porous walls between the human and the mutated non- human are dismantled. Kumiko Sato writes:

> The emergence of female cyborgs in Japanese cyberpunk, who

> replaced the role of the male hero that characterized the first wave of American cyberpunk, explains how Japanese cyberpunk enacts its claim on the dual subjectivity of Japaneseness. Strong female cyborgs and androids so dominant in recent Japanese science fiction are actually presented as referencing signifiers of the empty subject at the center, who is often embodied in the form of a passive, powerless male character. (353)

For Nausicaä, it is her invalid father who perhaps prompts her to take up the role of the protector. Chris' failing health is presumably instrumental in his decision to choose a successor. For Kusanagi, the plot thickens. Although the master puppeteer is shown to be omnipresent, he lacks the onticity that would perpetuate his existence through an offspring and offer him release. Hence, he seeks the agency of Kusanagi for whom, the process in not entirely consensual. Nausicaä chooses to die for her cause, but neither her becoming the messiah is left to her choice, nor is she seen objecting against it afterwards. She is overjoyed that her people and the jungle were both saved. For Kusanagi, choice meets compulsion halfway through as the master puppeteer takes control over her consciousness after she willfully dives into his mind. In the case of Juna, she is forced to sign up for the role at first. But she grows into the role and starts loving what she is assigned to do, going to the extent of making independent decisions as the avatar. In the end, the question of choice for her is left ambivalent. Though Juna says in the final episode, "I actually knew it. It's true. So no matter how happy I may have been, I might suddenly feel empty […] I must have been feeling it in my heart, the pain and sorrow of this planet. But I kept pretending that I didn't know (Kawamori)".

To some, it might sound like a compulsory justification on the part of the creator. While she says she felt miserable for the earth; the cause of her moroseness could have been any other; problems with her broken family, the issues in her love life and so on. Yet in a manner of speaking, all three characters are cybernauts to certain degrees of self-fashioning.

The problematization in the scope of queering might be further fleshed out, considering the fact that all three creators of the texts are male who have

created female leads. These figures are given a mission, an amount of agency and an individual identity, irrespective of the fact whether they are organic or synthetic. Positioning the women at the centre and rendering them with apparent agency, while simultaneously depriving them of choice without any strings attached could provoke a double binary that might not actually empower, but perpetuate the idea of oppression. Whether the queering empowers the cybernauts is another issue. The normatively gendered bodies of the protagonists do not qualify Haraway's claim that the cyborg is post-gendered, liberated from the sexual binaries. Judith Squires writes in "Fabulous Feminist Futures":

> We cannot assume that the current cybernetic developments will not also result in ontologies that, though redrawn, are nonetheless still highly gendered […] one might even conjecture that cyber culture is a particularly masculine exploration of the continuity between mind and machine, of particular import to the masculine notion of the self which had defined itself in terms of the mind as distinct from the immateriality of both body and machine. (362)

Another question is whether the queered transformation is instrumental for the deliverance of the subject to a necessarily post- human plane. For Nausicaä, there is the hint of queering prior to her transformation; when she becomes the surrogate ruler of instead of her father. Post transformation, she is shown to revert her old persona, shedding the blue garments of the majestic messiah. For Kusanagi, the borders are again already ruptured because of her possession of the 'ghost.' Haraway writes; "pre-cybernetic machines could be haunted, there was always a specter of ghost in the machine" (Haraway 10). But Kusanagi, being an advanced cybernetic being also possesses the 'ghost'. Also, when Batou recovers her post-consummation; she is seen within the pre-pubescent female synthetic body. The perverse creative process occurs in a plane which is perhaps beyond human cognition; but the creation descends back to the ontic plane. It is perhaps no coincidence that the product of the consummation is entrapped within the body of a child; reminiscing the puppeteer's desire for an offspring to continue the flow within the higher structures of the net. The

desire for release as well as perpetuation through an offspring is a primordially organic instinct. Deleuze and Guattari state:

> Hence the coupling that takes place within the partial object-flow connective synthesis also has another form: product/ producing. Producing is always something "grafted onto" the product; and for that reason desiring-production is production of production, just as every machine is a machine connected to another machine. (6)

The 'desiring machine' by Deleuze and Guattari suggests a chain, where every machine breaks the flow of the other; but also constitutes a consistent flow by itself and it is the 'desire' that makes it more real than fantastical. Kusanagi, as others knew is terminated, but another existence becomes functional in her place, ending one flow and starting another within the 'infinite scope of the network'. For Juna, the hint of the queer prior to transformation is subtle. Before she becomes the avatar, her boyfriend tells her that he wants to 'become one with her'. It is a queer choice of words while he expresses his sexual desire. Juna does not disagree, but is rather shown to take a bite of his ice- cream, which could be indicative of an oral stimuli. Post-transformation, she keeps on shifting between the two identities and never completely gives up the human counterpart of her existence. Haraway did not consider the cyborg as an object of a post-human reality herself. In an interview with Hari Kunzru she says:

> I try to avoid terms like post human … there is no such thing as 'human' in a historical sense - that human beings as we know them and as they are always already immersed always already producing what it means to be human in relationship with each other and with objects - obviously - and so there is no post human here - it's not giving up all these things you feel organically in order to live in the machine.

Technology is ubiquitous, whether techno- queering leads to post-humanity or not. It is not always renounced vis-à-vis ecological tendencies. In Nausicaä, technology is harnessed to its optimum for the reclamation of nature, in accordance with the steam punk trope. On the other hand, though

technology is the key in Juna's quest, there is a general undertone that tends to complete renunciation of technology where ideas such as organic farming are proliferated. Kusanagi, a cyborg, is not afraid to connect to the natural impulses of the 'ghost'. Though there is a possibility, her cybernetic body does not betray her under water and she comes back safe from her diving escapades. But even without an ecological impulse, the text breaks into techno- euphoria at the end. The position is uncertain as either in termination or preservation of Kusanagi, technology is indispensable.

Haraway's 'ironic' cyborg is meant to challenge all ontic binaries, without dissolving into totality and yet become a post-gendered entity. The three cybernauts herein could be partially subsumed into Haraway's vision; as they internalize 'differences' without their complete dismissal, while challenging normative binaries. Techno-queer cyber-feminism, which offers a new interface of resistance in the normative politics of identity, perhaps bears the capacity to engender multiplicities within the discourses of gender.

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Translating from Page to Screen: A Study of the Adaptations of Milan Kudera's *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* and Anita Desai's *In Custody*

Naresh K. Vats

Cinema is a new form of literary expression that started as an experiment with visual, and then audio-visual experience. It remains a technical-commercial activity. However an urge to tell a story and propagate ideas has guided it to the present form. Traditionally, the criticism of an adaptation film is primarily focussed on how closely the film looked like its source literary text. Traditional analysis talked about in what manner the movie differs or is faithful to the basic story, theme, aesthetics and structure of the source. If the 'gap' is far wide, the film is pronounced as a failure – it is judged to have violated and betrayed the source. Robert Stem in this regard says that the idea of fidelity refers to some adaptations failing to realise the main points of the source text, or an adaptation couldn't adapt the source text as some other adaptations did. But the question is – Is loyalty the whole idea behind an adaptation? as stem states:

> Indeed, it is questionable whether strict fidelity is even possible. An adaptation is automatically different and original due to the change of medium. The shift from a single-track verbal medium such as the novel to a multitrack medium like film, which can play not only with words (written and spoken) but also with music , sound effects and moving photographic images, explains the unlikelihood, and I would suggest even the undesirability, of literal fidelity. (3-4)

Often a critic seems to be taking sides with the book. It is important to understand that a written text is a verbal medium which lets you conceive the narrative, the voices, the images and the action in your mind; whereas a film tells you the story using verbal, non-verbal and technology. A written text is read any number of times, and every reading is different as every reader is different. Similarly, a film adaptation is a reading of the film

maker. Hence, every adaptation is different. While adapting a literary text the film maker borrows from the existing text, and appropriates the narrative, theme, situation etc.; and transforms it in the medium of cinema making use of its methods, technology and material available at his disposal. Corrigan suggests:

> The words of a novel, as countless commentators have pointed out, have a virtual, symbolic meaning; we as readers, or as directors have to fill in their paradigmatic indeterminancies. A novelist's portrayal of a character as "beautiful" induces us to imagine the person's features in our minds. Flaubert never ever tells us the exact color of Emma Bovary's eyes, but we color them nonetheless. A film, by contrast, must choose a specific performer. Instead of a virtual, verbally constructed Madame Bovary open to our imaginative reconstruction, we are faced with a specific actress, encumbered with nationality and accent, a Jennifer Jones or an Isabelle Huppert. (75)

Since the very beginning when cinema emerged as narrative tool it has been looking through the popular literary texts, especially novels, as source. This urge to acquire an established literary text does not necessarily result into a mindless copy – in terms of content, imagery, words, structure etc. Brian McFarlane cites Morris Beja's observation in *Novel to Film: An Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation* that "since the inception of the Academy Awards in 1927-8, more than three fourths of the awards for "best picture" have gone to adaptations ... [and that] the all-time box-office successes favour novels even more" (8). Written texts such as novels or plays have long been adapted for film screen either for their literary merit or for their commercial appeal by rewriting it as screenplay. The screen adaptation is bound to have some differences because of the differences in codes governing the two texts; one medium is highly visual and the other is purely descriptive. In other words, film adaptation is translating a written image into audio-visual image.

A film is play of colours, light, shade, and sound. As a written text employs extra-linguistic codes, a film employs non-verbal elements like costumes, make-up, looks etc. However a film as medium has its own

limits as far as visualisation and communication of written details is concerned. Indian cinema is no exception. Sangita Gopal observes in her essay "Coming to a Multiplex Near You: Indian Fiction in English and New Bollywood Cinema" that:

> When filmmakers have turned to literature, they have done so because a cinematic adaptation of the literary work already exists (as in case of the serial adaptations of Sharatchandra Chatterjee's *Devdas*) or in order to self-consciously break the mold of the farmulaic Hindi film by drawing on the novelty and cultural capital offered by a literary work. (362)

This paper attempts to evaluate *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1988), directed by Philip Kaufman, screenplay by Jean-Claude Carrière and Philip Kaufman, from the novel by Milan Kundera and National Award winning film *Muhafiz* (1993) as adaptation of Anita Desai's Booker prize nominated novel *In Custody* (1984).

The Unbearable lightness of Being as screen adaptation of the English novel by the same name which is a translation of the novel of ideas translated by Michael Henry Heim from Nesmesitna lehkost byti written in Czech by Milan Kundera. The novel is highly difficult to 'film' given the complexity of psychological rendering of life, love, flirtation and, of course, Beethoven. Conveying the complex idea of lightness and weight on screen poses a positive challenge as Kundera is more verbal than visual. The novel appears more a philosophical essay, a discursive entity.

Political oppression, emigration, censorship, and human nature are the perpetual themes in Milan Kundera's novels who himself suffered communist regime; he loads his novels with his psycho-philosophical reflections. Kundera raises the issues of political high handedness in his novels without losing the focus of the issue of existence or that of 'being'. He was born on April 1, 1929 in Brno, Czechoslovakia. He had a close bonding with music as his father was a pianist and musicologist, and he studied at the Academy of Music and Dramatic Arts. He was a member of film faculty from 1958 till 1969. Persecution, oppression, censorship and emigration that followed the Prague Spring in 1968 and Soviet occupation appear as background score integrated with the main narratives of his

novels. The sections are not evenly arranged – sections and chapters seem to have been set so as to satisfy his sense of music and rhythm. Along with the main story and his constant theme of loss and persecution, Kundera cuts-in several issues relating with 'being' – life, death, happiness, sadness, lightness, weight, sex, Kitsch, Expressionism and what not. He seems not to bother about relevance when he decides to discuss his philosophical bits. Kundera's novels can be rightfully called Philosophical-fictions.

Kundera as omnipresent and an all knowing voice opens the novel with brainstorming over Nietzsche's idea of 'eternal return' – "... to think that everything recurs as we once experienced it, and that the recurrence itself recurs ad infinitum!" (3) He rephrases the idea as " ... a life which disappears once and for all, which does not return, is like a shadow, without weight, dead in advance and whether it was horrible, beautiful, or sublime, its horror, sublimity, and beauty means nothing" (3). It means if it does not return its very essential qualities lose significance. It becomes weightless and attracts no more notice of ours than a war between two African kingdoms in 14th that altered nothing in the destiny of the world even when a hundred thousand blacks perished in excruciating torment. Similarly Kundera cites the example of French Revolution. As "the bloody years" of French Revolution have become distant and would not return, it will lose its weight, will be visible mere in words, and will cease to frighten.

When a screenplay is adapted from a source like a popular or commercially successful novel, short story, play or a biography, it attract a great amount of theoretical discussion involving the comparison between the two texts i.e. how similar or different these texts are owing to the different storytelling media. It is interesting to note how much a filmic text has gained or lost considering "the novel's opportunities for expression through descriptive prose and the literary trope metaphors and similies" (Frank Eugene Beaver). The screen adaptation of a literary source has to be different; however "many of the essential elements of characterisation and plot in a film emerge through non verbal communication: costumes, makeup, physique, and action."

The film version of a novel is its translation from written text to screen language; and in the process of translation much has been omitted due to the limitation of the medium and time of narration. For example in *The Joke* much

has been omitted during its first translation from Czech to English – sentences, paragraph, and an entire chapter. It was the translator's choice. In case of film adaptation of the novel *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* it is the translator (the director along with the screen writer) who chose to omit certain parts in order to keep it 'light' and 'bearable' – the reflective content are simply removed. Richness of details in the novel would prove to be a distraction in the film. The film reduces the novel to a linear story which is eroticized adding explicit lovemaking sessions as entertainment *masaala* in Bollywood movies. The psycho philosophical content of the novel proves inadaptable. The idea of Kitsch that Kundera developes over a considerable space in pages, is given only a few seconds space in the film. Beaver observes that:

> The screenwriter aims for a swift economical development of character and plot. Often secondary characters and subplots from a novel are used minimally in a film because they clutter and interrupt the steady development of dramatic crises that are essential to the success of a motion picture. For this same reason screenwriters in adapting a novel will most often select the active parts of the plot and ignore the elements that do not directly relate to it. A memorable minor character in a book may be only a background extra in a film, and an idea that an author may develop poetically and metaphorically in a novel may be reduced to a passing line of dialogue or an image on the screen. (5)

Tereza was victim of her ambition to attain something higher, to escape her excruciating past, to have an identity, and to be herself. Her consciousness of her imprudent low life had settled into the interstices of her psyche like molten matter from the volcano of her inner self. Sometimes she felt tempted to go down below which was Tereza's 'vertigo. Kundera explains his own meaning of 'vertigo' which is different from the popular meaning of the term: from 'fear to fall' to 'desire to fall':

> Anyone whose goal is 'something higher' must expect some day to suffer vertigo. What is vertigo? Fear of falling? Then why do we feel it even when the observation tower comes equipped with a sturdy handrail? No, vertigo is something other

> than the fear of falling. It is the voice of the emptiness below us which tempts and lures us, it is the desire to fall, against which, terrified, we defend ourselves.
>
> The naked women marching around ... These were her vertigo: she heard a sweet (almost joyous summons to renounce her fate and soul. The solidarity of the soulless calling her. ... (*The Unbearable*, 20)

Tomas's personality is impelled by his inner drive to know the subtle differences that separate one individual from the other. As a surgeon he "knew that there was nothing more difficult to capture than the human 'I'. There are many more resemblances between Hitler and Einstein or Brezhnev and Solzhenitsyn than there are differences. Using numbers, we might say that there is one-millionth part dissimilarity to nine hundred ninety-nine thousand nine hundred ninety-nine millionths parts similarity" (193). In his 'erotic friendship' relations he merely does not engage in eternal repetition of the sexual behaviour. The narratige further reads:

> When he saw a woman in clothes, he could naturally imagine more or less what she would look like naked (his experience as a doctor supplementing his experience as a lover), but between the approximation of the idea and the precision of reality there was a small gap of the unimaginable, and it was this hiatus that gave him no rest. And then, the pursuit of the unimaginable does not stop with the revelations of nudity; it goes much further: How would she behave while undressing? What would she say when he made love to her? How would her sighs sound? How would her face distort at the moment of orgasm? (193)

In the film this idea was spoken by Sabina as a comment on Tomas's behaviour. The impact would not be the same if Tomas himself spoke these words. It is at such places that the film maker uses his imagination and decides the cinematic-code for communicating the idea to the audience. A lot has been left out, kept unsaid and unrepresented. e.g. Tereza's mother and exploits have been completely ignored. But I believe the character of Tereza has been reimagined, and the subplot dealing with her mother's life (and Tereza's early life) is not considered necessary in order to bring out Tereza's character. Similarly early

life of Tomas (his wife, his parents, and his son) too has been omitted by the film maker. Tomas believes "If we only have one life to live, we might as well not have lived at all," and specifically (with respect to commitment) "There is no means of testing which decision is better, because there is no basis for comparison."

With several omissions and minimal digressions, the film adaptation has maintained the spirit and storyline of the source text. In the end of the novel as well as of the film, the ambition of Tereza and passion of Tomas to explore "that one-millionth part of dissimilarity" in women too end with the death of Tomas and Tereza (193). They lose weight and become light as they would not return. Sabina is already light as she has not accumulated any weight of what so ever around her. So far as unbearability of the Lightness is concerned, Kundera seems to have left the meaning free. The film maker in his adaptation too has kept the narration open-ended for the viewers to have their own final perception of lightness and weight.

***In Custody* (Novel)**

Desai's *In Custody* (1984) balanced in form and design can be placed among the "pure novels like those of Jane Austen, in which all the parts are harmoniously subordinated to the design and perfection of form." (Tripathi: 204) It has attracted a strong corpus of critical interpretations that range from feminist issues, language politics, identity crisis, to self realisation, even beyond. *In Custody* talks about relations – relation between individuals, between ideas and ideologies and, above all, relation with one's own self. The main action of the novel is Deven's attempt to conduct an interview with Nur. It is very difficult to decide who is the main hero of the story – Deven or Nur! Deven who carries 'the action' of the story is a lacklustre middle class, middle aged man. As a professor he is a junior (temporary lecturer in Lala Ram Lal College at Mirpore), powerless and lacks assertiveness. Moreover he has to choose Hindi as his teaching subject despite the fact that he has Urdu as his first love. He feels quite weak while introducing himself to Nur – "Deven shrank back in apology. 'No, sir, I teach in – in the Hindi department. I took my degree in Hindi because –'" (39) As a poet he is not well received so he aspires to be associated with the phenomenal poet (Nur).

***In Custody/Muhafiz* (Film)**

A Merchant Ivory Production *In Custody/Muhafiz* adapts Desai's novel *In Custody* with the main plot as interaction between a distinguished poet and his academician fan who wants to conduct the poet's interview and subsequently write a book on the legendary poet. It was directed by Ismail Merchant, and the screenplay was written jointly by Shahrukh Hussain and Anita Desai herself. The film obviously depicts the image of Urdu poetry and state of Urdu language. Keeping with the popular narrative of language politics and Hindi-Urdu rivalry, the film adaptation seems to have toned down the antagonism to an extent. In addition to this, it raises the issue of self and identity. The film image of 'Nur Sahab' is quite different from the looks suggested by the novelist in order to suit the actor. Even the place of Nur's residence is changed from Delhi to Bhopal. For Urdu poetry the poems of Faiz Ahmad Faiz are used. The intolerance for other language exhibited by the poet Nur brings out his frustration, decreasing physical strength, obesity, dying reputation jealousy for his own wife's rising poetic stature. His rant against Hindi is in fact transference. Hindi is made the punching bag. Whenever there are any demographic or political shifts, shifts in linguistic focus are quite common – worse cases of language politics are seen in Pakistan and Bangladesh. It reminds me the take of a contemporary poet Munawwar Rana in this regard:

> *"Lipat jata hun maa se aur mousi muskurati hai*
> *mai urdu mai ghazal kahta hu hindi muskurati hai"*

In film the focus shifts on Deven who is making desperate efforts to achieve something higher in his otherwise uneventful life. Unable achieve anything worthwhile he wants to be associated with the legendry poet and make efforts to serve the world of poetry, which would provide him with feelings of worth. Nur too has lost his glory and admirers. He is always complaining, accusing, lamenting, as if in eternal search of someone who could be blamed and punished for his fall. The novel amply describes the situation:

> 'Cowards – babies,' he was taunting ... 'You recite verses as if they were nursery rhymes your mother had composed. ... We need the roar of lions, or the boom of cannon, so that we can march upon these Hindiwallahs and make them run. Let them see the power of Urdu,' he thundered. 'They think it is chained and tamed in the dusty

> yards of those cemeteries that they call universities, but can't we show them that it can still let out a roar or a boom?' (51-52)

In an interview with Magda Costa, Desai is not happy with the cinematic version of the novel. She says that she was:

> very shocked because in my imagination it was all very grey, very dark and dirty, and I just couldn't believe my eyes when I saw it in gorgeous Technicolor, and everyone beautifully dressed looking handsome… That's the world of Ismail Merchant; he makes everything look so beautiful, gorgeous. I had to distance myself from it; I had to detach myself and accept that fact that it is his version of the book. He is very happy with it. It is not my vision: I would have preferred it in black and while more in the school of New Realism.

The film ends with the visuals of demolition of an old structure, and funeral procession of the old poet. "Nur Sahab ne apna kalaam meri hifazat main chhor deya hai. Ab main uska muhafiz hun." Deven's words have no effect on the world and worldly people like Siddiqi.

> *"Jo ruke toh koh-e-garaan the hum, jo chale toh jaan se guzar gae*
> *Rah-e-yaar hamne kadam kadam tujhe yaadgaar banaa diya."*

Who is the muhafiz, and whose muhafiz? The questions remain not fully answered. Certainly the film-maker/director is in control of his text. An adapted film provides a common platform for the reader of a literary work to see how it may look like, and for the audience to closely know the source text in order to be familiar with the basic idea behind the film.

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Beyond the 'No Exit': Reconfiguring the Trajectory of (Hegemonic) Gendered Spaces and Strategies of Resistance in Shashi Deshpande's *In the Country of Deceit*

Niharika

In the Country of Deceit is an acclaimed and diversely interpreted work of Deshpande. However, it is pertinent to note that in the substantial body of the critical interpretations of the novel, the trajectory of gendered spaces is yet to be interpreted vis-a-vis the framework of counter-hegemonic position(s) against the dominant socio-cultural order signifying the praxis of transgression. That's what the present critique aims to undertake by way of examining a detailed analysis of the novel which is informed by the methodology of transgressive understanding of counter-hegemonic femininity and allied theoretical instrumentalities relevant thereto.It is in this larger context that Deshpande's portrayal of Devayani, the protagonist, has created ripples in the Indian English novel as she is a middle-class family product but is open to challenge the hegemonic order by way of transgressing the accepted codes of socio-cultural signification. This connotes her intent to go beyond definitions/gendered inscriptions that is fuelled by her earnestness to make a counter response to the hegemonic masculinity. Under such context, she also explores her sexuality in novel terms¯a domain denied to the second sex. However, her assertion is subtle and manifests a lot of complexity. It is in this sense that such assertion is worth analyzing so as to lay bare and understand the finer nuances of being a woman exposed to gendered subjectivity. Accordingly, the paper makes a humble attempt to interpret Devayani's crusade through the hegemonic structures/ inscriptions before she achieves a psycho-social-existential negotiation.

Devayani is the main protagonist of the narrative. Having chosen the stance of questioning the imbalanced gendered inscriptions by exercising a counter-hegemonic position against the dominant socio-cultural order, she faces crisis in almost all of her relationships. Seen thus, Deshpande's portrayal of Devayani has created ripples in the Indian English novel scenario as she is a middle-class family product but is open to transgressing the normative

signification of socio-cultural order. In this sense, she is also allowed to explore/ decode her sexuality¯a domain denied to the second sex. However, her assertion is subtle and manifests a lot of complexity. In this larger context, such assertion is worth analyzing so as to lay bare and understand the finer nuances of being a woman as a *gendered subjectivity*.Accordingly, the critique attempts to interpretDevayani's crusade through the hegemonic structures/inscriptions before she achieves a psycho-social-existential negotiation.

Delving deeper, Devayani is a liberated woman and refracts her agency in multivalent proportions throughout the narrative. However at the outset of the novel, she represents an inscribed being. Accordingly, she may be perceived being a passive and submissive character. Apparently, she has the habit of compromising in everything and adjusting in every possible way by modeling her lifestyle as per the wishes of others and thus fits into their shoes *unquestioningly*. She appears to be unaware of her real worth and thus she continues playing a quarry to everyone. Women are entwined in this *make-belief world* where "…the cult of obedience is so consistently thrust upon women and thus excluding them from any face to face confrontation with real life" (Jain and Singh 43).Values, mannerisms, pressures and societal training impose indifference or a blind silence to her feelings. So, all the time and in all situations, Devayani allows herself to (inertly) accept the prescriptions. Such apparent conduct of Devayani makes an explicit reference to her tacit internalization of the hegemonic order and the requirements attached to it which she prefers to take on in the subsequent phases of the narrative. In this way, her journey signifies the clandestine contest-oriented dynamics of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic power structures whichsubsequently unsettle the apparent power paradigm(s) in the novel.

The narrative has been divided into four sections. The first part named "Ground Zero" talks of destruction and demolition in the very beginning. Speaking symbolically, the demolition signifies the dislocation of a value system. Cross-connecting such demolition with Devayani, she opens up her being to be re-inscribed and thus prefers the code of transgression in order to unsettle the *'normative givens'* governing her existence. Subsequently, a process of change starts which gradually breaks the age-old programmed thinking of the protagonist. It is Savi¯Devayani's sister¯who has designed the new house and thus has dismantled the ancestral home. For Devayani, it comes as a surprise since it

manifests a complete reversal of the old order. She realizes:

> Savi had deliberately worked towards something that was a complete reversal of the old house, a denial of everything our old home had been. The large rooms, the light and air that came in from the huge windows, the broad sills on which we could sit, the sense of openness¯all these were a total contrast to the dingy, dark small rooms we had lived in. The most startling change was in our bedrooms, Savi's and mine. Large, spacious and opening out on to the back where a walled garden was to be, they were Savi's belated defiant statement against the tiny dark room the two of us had shared as children. (Deshpande 4)

Symbolically, this change indicates a fresh beginning which brings color to the life of the protagonist and she feels "…this was not an end, but a beginning. A fresh start. A clean slate" (3). Hence, the new house signifies'Ground Zero' for Devayani.

Moving on, Devayani's potential resistance gains impetus when she confronts Ashok Chinappa. Through her relationship with Ashok, we are able to decode how Devayani gradually matures and evolves from Devayani to Devi and finally to Divya¯a name given by Ashok to her. When the narrative begins, Devayani is in her 30's and lives alone in a small town of Rajnur after the death of her parents. The narrative delineates her state in the following way:

> All these years I had been the accompanist to other people's lives. First I had been a follower of my spirited, old sister, then in charge of my parents' lives, the observer of their tragedy. For a while I had acted as my cousin Kshama's helper and later I had been Sindhu's attendant after her surgery. Now, for the first time, I had to play solo. I had no one else to look after, no one to think about. I felt as if I was waiting for the curtain to go up, waiting for something to happen. (Deshpande 8)

And that 'something' is the entry of a man (Ashok) in her life who causes a fundamental change in her being. However, it is important to emphasize that her solo performance proves to be disastrous in the eyes of other people for whom she did so much all these years and her decisions are criticized by the representatives of the hegemonic order.

In order to assert her emphasized femininity and the hard-won independence, she chooses to violate/transgress the institution of marriage and thus she is not interested in getting married. It is in this perspective that Devayani willfully rejects the varied marriage proposals but prefers an 'illicit' relationship with a married man who is much older than her, and is a father of a ten year old daughter. Importantly,it is not a decision which is made in a hurry or in a fit of emotion. She ruminates seriously over the pros and cons associated with her relationship and she finally accepts Ashok as he is. It is also true that she gets attracted towards his enigmatic personality. Surely, there is a fond regard, adherence and telepathy between them which define their relationship. Ashok calls her up again and says "I rang up, but I only wanted to hear your voice. I made you speak in the morning just to hear you" (Deshpande 76). Like a stalking lover he tries to enamor her. Devayani is equally attracted towards him. She thinks about him and says "I could not sleep. I kept hearing his voice as if I'd taped the conversation and was replaying the tape in my mind. The exact words in the same order over and over again" (Deshpande 77).

Apart from being apprehensive of what is going on in her life, Devayani struggles hard with the social stigmas by probing her own mind and heart time and again. It is worth considering here that the hegemonic processes create identities and the psycho-social conditioning prohibits one's mind to work in the intuitive direction. This perhaps confuses and scares her. A dynamic contest goes on in her mind and she ruminates: "And why did he keep ringing me up? Was he flirting with me? I used to watch boys and girls indulge in it, amazed at the light-hearted banter, at the way they enjoyed the inane talk" (Deshpande 78). However, the next meeting with Ashok proves to be a turning point in their relationship. While dropping her back from Rani's house, Ashok proposes to Devayani. Ashok's contention startles her being as she feels enchanted by his words. He says: "I'm a married man. I have a daughter, she's nine, no, she'll be ten this year…I can promise you nothing. Nothing" (91). He is perhaps physically attracted towards her and like a teenage lover; he showers delightful words to charm her. Infatuated by his words, Devayani feels touched despite the fact she is sensitive to the hegemonic eyes around that make her conscious of the fact that whatever is happening is unnatural. Therefore, she temporarily holds her emotions. However, she is prepared and somewhat ready to enter into the country of deceit by this time and she ruminates: "Now I cannot tell Savi about

this new nightmare. I cannot tell that this time I am frightened, not of the man, but of myself, of my desire to *run*, not away from him, but into his arms" (94). She acknowledges her fears and accepts her desires. For this, she opts to fight with the world around and her own deep rooted socialization. Hence, this stance signifies her counter-hegemonic resistance/subversion towards the socio-cultural gendered inscriptions which permeate a woman's being.

At last comes the time of her final acceptance of her relationship with him. An anonymous letter by Ashok perplexes her and makes her conscious. She trembles and exclaims: "For a moment I was confused, it was like blacking out…my hands were shaking…I had a strange sensation of coldness on my face and putting my hand to my cheek found to my surprise that it was wet. I tried to wipe my tears, but they kept flowing. I gave up finally and let them flow unhindered" (Deshpande 127). Swinging between her desires and duties, she suddenly puts a stop to her thoughts. Through such psychodrama of Devayani, the novelist extrapolates the different ideological elements that shape her identity, the institutionalized dogmas that restrict her sexuality. Now, Devayani courageously takes the decision. She does not brood for long and soon jumps into action although this may result in her social censure.She goes to meet her lover and finally accepts her own decision/inner voice. This is the beginning of her journey of love towards fulfillment. She stops conforming her femininity and so starts enjoying being an unburdened woman. By decolonizing the hegemonic order and thus appropriating her marginality, Devayani puts an end to her socialized self.Resultantly, she experiences a multi-dimensional gratification vis-à-vis her relationship with Ashok.The sense of freedom and self-assertion¯which was imprisoned somewhere deep inside her¯manifests a release on her part. In this sense, she blooms and comes out to be a 'new woman'. She realizes that there is no point in deceiving herself. She speaks the truth to herself and admits that she wants to be with Ashok. The socio-cultural inscriptions do entrap her, confuse her, frighten her but ultimately the inner counter-hegemonic desire convinces her to assert her core being.

Not only this, Ashok's confirmation of promising her nothing and admitting that he is a married man with a daughter does not move her a bit. She contemplates: "What difference does it make to me that he has a wife and a daughter?" (Deshpande 94). Quite aware of the fact that her relationship with her lover would never be accepted and appreciated by her family, she favors to

continue with it and accepts the situation bravely. A trail of norms and acculturations warns her to be open eyed and audible to the potential storm in her life but she chooses the difficult path. In a sense, she prefers the strategies of resistance in order to gratify herself of the long thirst of her being. This thirst along with her uncompromising desire leads her to physical gratification which she welcomes whole heartedly. The societal inhibitions try to curb her desires time and again, hold her back, checks her steps but all these tangles prove futile. Significantly, the way Devayani inches towards Ashok is also symbolic of her moving out of the patriarchal space by adopting resistance to carve out her counter-hegemonic stance which brings a paradigm shift in her life. Interestingly, her movement contains fluidity and assertion whereby the over-arching hegemonic structures are ripped apart so as to endow her new vision towards life and its socio-cultural artifacts. In other words, the process of her rejuvenation is marked with re-inscribing her gendered being in order to see the clear light of the day. Her choicest relationship with Ashok is so intense that the social barriers become invisible to Devayani. She boldly explores her sexuality and maintains her stand with courage. She has the guts to accept the shortcomings of the relationship which shows her uncompromising wish to have her share of joy and ecstasy. Now, she is sure of herself. She is certain that: "I want a needlepoint of extreme happiness; I want a moment in my life which will make me feel I am touching the sky" (Deshpande 24). When she comes to know about Ashok's decision of taking up the promotion, she takes the things courageously and respects his decisions. She knows that there can be no future ahead.

Through the character of Devayani, the novelist presents a woman's journey to a new realm of realization where she not only accepts what she originally feels but also exhibits a strong sense of revelation of the shams of society. A woman is forced to identify with the fraudulent and phoney traditions to save and sustain her existence. In this sense, Devayani is very powerful and suggestively opens new vistas for the contemporary women. After realizing and relishing the relationship, she declares her love to the family too. It is an imaginary and illusionary union in the eyes of the family; a dirty quagmire. But she herself feels eternal happiness in the presence of Ashok. Before the family could know of her relations with Ashok, her happiness is visible to most of the characters in the novel. Sindhu exclaims, "You sound happy" (Deshpande 147).

Yet again: "Naseem says it differently.'You look as if you've been Brassoed,'she said. 'As if someone has brought out the shine and polish in you'" (148).

Speaking retrospectively, Devayani's life had always been restrictive and limited. Her reins were in the hands of her parents first and then in the hands of her sister Savi. Under such context, this (love) affair acts as a catharsis. It elevates Devayani and thus liberates her of the societal obligations. So far she has been defining herself differently with respect to the other people. The acceptance of Ashok's proposal is the first decision she makes on her own. This may be the reason that she never regrets it. It would be ironical to mention here that in her relationship with Ashok too, Devayani never asks for anything. But there is a strong sense of fulfillment here. She has the strength of holding the connectedness and calling it off when it does not meet the desired requirements. She shows her fortitude and determination to harbor the relatedness, project it to the family and also to bear the brunt and criticism of other people around her. She comes out to be a powerful woman who was earlier firmly confined under the hegemonic limitations. She fights with her guilt too. She exclaims: "You get used to everything¯you learn how to live with suffering, pain, death. Why not with guilt then? Yes, I would learn to cope with guilt as well" (Deshpande 152). Hence, she dares to break the circumscribed life which a woman is expected to lead. Studied thus, it is apt to mention Atrey and Kirpal's observation:

> Deshpande's art lies in selecting situations with which most Indian women can identify. Her focus is on the woman within the marital, domestic relationship. She seeks to expose the ideology by which a woman is trained to play her subservient role in society. Her novels eclectically employ postmodern technique of deconstructing patriarchal culture and customs, and revealing these to be man-made constructs. (15)

Devayani realizes that by being unresponsive to her own feelings, she has cheated herself from her inner voice, longing and urges. Every other relation in her life believes that s/he knows what suits Devayani. But by asserting her will and taking charge of her actions, she confirms that she belongs to herself and then to the world of others. Importantly, Devayani despite having played the role of a good daughter and a good sister to perfection; finds herself alone and

estranged. She realizes that she has been unfair to herself. There is something more she desires for. Hence, she does not discourage herself from acknowledging her friendship with a married man. Devayani is different in the sense that she dares to question the established identity of a woman and provides a new face to herself and to the society she is part of. Bande observes something similar when she comments:

> Shashi Deshpande lets her women experience the confusing and disturbing silence within, get a glimpse of their inner being and empower themselves to confront the power politics, comprehend the situation and get control on their lives. In that their intention to assert and defy is evident. That is how the novel resisting patriarchy is born. (47)

Devayani is drawn towards Ashok as he treats her as his equal, gives her time and the required space. He never imposes anything on her and waits patiently for her responses and decisions. She is impressed by his truthfulness and straightforwardness towards her. She develops an ease while being in his company. There prevails a maze of doubts, uncertainty and fear but this relationship solves the incertitude. Both Ashok and Devayani are negating the age old conventional schemas of the society and project the new breakthroughs in their own respective gestures towards each other. There is no denying the fact that they bond well and are affectionate towards one another but they leave no strings attached when they unanimously decide to part their ways. They take no time to move ahead. Ashok handles the whole situation in a well-planned manner and takes no strain of this relationship within him. As soon as he gets promotion, he goes away. Devayani¯in her unique way¯copes with her emotional ties, fights her desires and comes out to be victorious. She feels as if she has won over herself by defying the world she inhabits. She contemplates about her own deeds and connects them with the socio-cultural chains which stuck forcefully to everyone's personality. She feels:

> And then I thought of what I had done, I thought, why had I done this? I knew it was wrong; nothing could make it not wrong. And yet, I had rushed into it. Why had I done it? I knew the answer. I did it because I wanted him, I wanted to be with him, I wanted to be in his company, I wanted to sleep with him, I wanted this relationship… (Deshpande 142).

She uses words like 'the other woman', 'the kept woman', 'a mistress' for her own self but after a while brushes all these abuses and accepts her decision. In this way, she startsliving in 'good faith'. In a way, she has already re-inscribed her being and thus moves "…beyond patriarchy" through her counter-hegemonic stance. (Tyson 92)

Hence, it is a story of a woman who desires to realize herself and regenerate her being with an intention to reconfigure the hegemonic order. Her resoluteness against the rife-ideologies paves the way for her determination. An attitude of non-compliance to the systems of power fuels her consciousness and thus she is determined to get fulfillment of her core being.Interestingly, Devayani doesn't speak her heart out to anyone except a few contemplative thoughts. Speech and silence convey and confirm the subtle polyphony of the text. In addition to this, the speech-silence relationship, in a way, equals the conflictual poetics of hegemonic and counter-hegemonic struggle of the narrative. Her strength is silence; her stoic silence which is impregnated with intellect.Thus, the turbulence of her mind and the pain of her heart are never laid bare. Having arrived at a self-determined identity of her own, she faces everything with an open heart and takes responsibility with a firm determination. Her counter-hegemonic aspirations culminate in Ashok's arms which also help her to assert a new being. Seen thus, their camaraderie may also be conceptualized as a transgression of the socio-cultural hegemonic order. Devayani transgresses from a docile woman to a demanding and asserting woman. No more a timid person, she shakes the hegemonic inhibitions and redeems herself. Substantiated thus, it is not simply a repetitive story of a woman suffering because of her unfavorable life but a sensitive concern of a woman's self-making¯her "becoming". Beauvoir, in her influential treatise *The Second Sex*, observes*:* "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman. No biological, psychological, or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents in society; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature…which is described as feminine" (281).

Devayani accounts for what she becomes and thus evolves from her *becoming* a new being. In this journey she transgresses the prescriptive gender roles and thus reforms herself by asserting a new being. In this sense, shemay be valorized for standing against the patriarchy by way of asserting her

individuality.She defies the normative and prescriptivesocio-cultural order which creates the imbalanced living spaces for its inhabitants. Such spaces are gendered and thus marginalize women from times immemorial. She resists against this hegemonic order by opting a counter-hegemonic stance against it.

Observed thus, the resistance and the disapproval to sustain the hegemonic specificities of gender and sexuality by Devayani are undoubtedlylaudable. The point in focus refers to the acceptance of Devayani of her core self/the recognition of her own 'being'. Bande observes:

> …the women of the new generation live for purely personal gratifications, May be sexual or psychological. Critics see this withdrawal variously as quest for autonomy, individuation or a deviant behavior. Feminists read it as women's need for a new space that Mary Daly defines as 'new cosmosis. (210)

Devayani challenges the hegemonic consensual belief wherebythe life of a female is set to stay on the 'threshold'. However, she asserts to be free to think/act.Thus, she counter attacks the hegemonic pressures and successfully "…erodes the male belief that a woman has no need to seek salvation or fulfillment because her world is contained within the threshold" (Bande 210). Hence, Deshpande presents Devayani to be a different kind of female whomoves beyond her ordained gender role and asserts through counter-hegemonic *performance*. Rice and Waugh quote Judith Butler fromher seminal treatise *Bodies That Matter*:

> …gender is always in fact a performance, not what one is but what one does…the performance of gender is never singular but always citational and reiterative. There is always scope for pastiche, *reformation*, play and *resistance*. (228)

Hence, the heroine of this novel refuses to perform her given gender role and she breaks the cords tied to the female identity. Perspectivized thus, she expressively enters in the country of deceit whereby she explores her own existential space. The analysis lays bare the covert polemics of resistance with which the novelist enables her female protagonist to subvert *or* confront the dominant structure(s) of power-relations. It is in this larger context that the present study deals with the ambivalent/resistive disputations of the female protagonist.The study also interprets the finer nuances of being a woman as a

gendered subjectivity in order to decode complexity of the female experience with a consistent emphasis to delineate the hegemonic structures/inscriptions and counter-hegemonic polemical assertion for achieving psycho-social and existential authenticity.

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Naiveté as an Irrational Praxis: A Study of John Nash's *A Beautiful Mind*

Avani Bhatnagar

During the play of charades on a New Year's Eve, in the carnival like atmosphere people came as pirates, Indian squaw, black cat, monks and in all sorts of uncanny attires. But later came the father of all, the naked man wearing just the diaper and a sash of numerals 1959 with a smirky smile on face. "Having stolen the show, Nash grinned and bowed, waved a baby bottle full of milk at the assembled company, which was laughing loudly at this point— and then sauntered into the living room to join in the game of charades" (Nasar 239). The seeming charade of eccentric Nash became a moment of revelation to unveil his creative propensity in the form of naïve. The uninhibited spontaneity of Nash gave an access to the lurking innocence behind a philosophical being. This paper is an attempt to read the life of the mathematician John Nash whose naiveté allowed him to take philosophical irrational leaps.

The irrational here is the scientific philosophical praxis at the level of ideas whose dynamicity can be read through abstractions. It is an attempt to understand naiveté as a quintessential characteristic for a creative mind of hypothetical limits. In the first section, 'The Evolved Child', the paper talks about naiveté, whose formulation in a child's liberated self createsorganic patterns of unimaginable abstractions. The observant and imaginative leaps of a child become an opening wedge into the unseen territories.In the second section, 'The Uncarved Form', the paper talks about the unhindered rawness of a mathematician who is draped in nature's tapestry to retain the essence of his being. In the third section, 'Non- Equilibrium Harmony', the paper under the frame of Method in Madness from William Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, brings in the harmonious being of John Nash whose seeming incoherence is not the cacophonic disorder, but a symphonic expansion of uncomputable notations.

The Evolved Child

> But the adult is not the highest stage of development. The end of the cycle is that of the independent, clear-minded, all-seeing Child. That is the level known as wisdom. When the Tao Te Ching and other

> wise books say things like, "Return to the beginning; become a child again," that's what they're referring to. (*The Tao of Pooh*, 151)

John Nash retained the child in him and took over the novelty of a fresh mind with which he maintained his curiosity and acted on it with myriad approaches. When Nash came to Paris to meet his wife Alicia and his son he wrote "Alicia is in Paris expecting 'e'", who was his son John Charles who was addressed by his Nash as "Baby Epsilon" which is a tongue-in-cheek reference coined by a renowned mathematician who believed "that all infants are born knowing the proof of the Riemann Hypothesis and retain that knowledge until they are six months of age" (Nasar 277). The beauty of a child's mind glides on to the unimaginable ideas which becomes difficult to be thought of in the process of acquiring knowledge in a highbrow culture. Child's beauty lies in his innocence of bringing together what appears to be disjointed in an unpretentious way. The fragmented soon finds its coherence in the hands of a child to bring in infused creative cognisance within human spirits. The child is aware of things and enjoys the beauty of the world around in all kinds of peculiar ways. Bejamin Hoff in *The Tao of Pooh*, highlights the child who experiences the freedom of being anything and everything.

In the film *The Prestige*, Sarah's nephew is able to see the trick used by the magician which the other adults fail to understand. The cage magic where one bird disappears suddenly and the same bird comes again, the child could not avoid mangling the trick when the observant child questioned innocently, "where's his brother?" which astounds Borden who calls the boy "a sharp lad." The freedom of thought and eagle-eyed observations are not constrained by any pure rational normative standards. Naturally liberated child breaks through the functional constructs and is able to see through the strenuous reflections.

In "The Rainbow" Wordsworth describes the undecipherable acts of a child which havethe capability to take the people around him in a state of incredulity. He says:

> The Child is father of the man
> I could wish my days to be
> Bound each to each by natural piety. (7-9)

The mysteries of life are difficult to be understood in a rational way. And a child's seemingly unreasonable acts are difficult to be deciphered by a rational

mind. But the irrational ways of a little one cannot be negated because its beauty and innocence are the genesis of his being. Nature comes in its purity in the acts of a child. Nash held on to it to stay with and in the naiveté throughout, which brought out his essence of being.Wordsworth's ultimate wish to eternally be a part of the innate order is what Nash could fulfil for himself.Imagination, being one organic movement in a child's attempt for creative journey, elevates him and takes him to the unseen world of myriad possibilities.

Professor Martin Prochazka in the essay "Dream, Imagination and Reality in Literature: An Introduction", reflects on P.B. Shelley's idea of imagination as a "mere result of our remembrance of eternal ideas, but the extraordinary power of fleeting, subconscious impressions and effects, which recreate the world of our lives, including the ideas in our souls." Shelley feels that imagination is a way to free oneself from the constraints of human conditioning. Revolutionary spirit and ideas of freedom to enhance the human experience towards liberation was Shelley's guiding spirit.

Shelley says in the essay "A Defence of Poetry", "A poet participates in the eternal, the infinite and the one" (33). For him, the eternal continuous mind is the ultimate reality which encapsulates the inductive and comprehensive worldview. Keats says "I am certain of nothing but the holiness of heart's affection and the truth of imagination." The essence of "truth of imagination" elevateshuman cognition, going beyond normative ideas of reality. The non-linear imagination is the irrational path towards the unseen which creates the sense of beauty and therefore it is the truth of life. Albert Einstein regards the importance of imagination which is the nucleus of scientific endeavours. He says "I am enough of an artist to draw freely upon my imagination. Imagination is more important than knowledge. Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the world." Imagination extends human cognitive abilities and therefore is a creative medium rooted within the cosmic cognisance and yet beyond the familiar comprehension of human mind.

The spontaneity which is acquired by Nash in the process of learning and unlearning mathematics troubled people around him who failed to understand the beauty of a child's heart in the backdrop of an adult face. A "self-declared" free thinker found his spontaneity in his freedom of exploring the world (Nasar 143). Such free thinkers are like Ambrose who came to class one day with one

shoelace tied and the other untied and an amusing reply by the mathematician came out as a humorous remark. He said "I tied the left one and thought that the other must be tied by considerations of symmetry"(156). The need to sustain and live the naïve as a part of essential human consciousness can take humanity towards pleasantly progressive expedition.

Hoff puts it appropriately when he says, "As if from far away, it calls to us with the voice of a child's mind. It may be hard to hear at times, but it is important just the same, because without it, we will never find our way through the Forest" (155).

The Uncarved form

"From the state of the Uncarved Block comes the ability to enjoy the simple and the quiet, the natural and the plain. Along with that comes the ability to do things spontaneously and have them work, odd as that may appear to others at times" (*The Tao of Pooh*, 21).

Nash became that unbridled vehicle of mathematics which took nature's course in its exploration of unchartered terrains. He did not cast himself in the worlds mould. But he casted out patterns from the cosmic design retaining the natural order of his being. After a certain degree of knowledge he rejected books "taking the attitude that learning too much second hand would stifle creativity and originality. It was a dislike of passivity and giving up control" (68). He did not approve of being "intellectually beholden" (71). Scholarship of Nash was a combination of learning, unlearning and ingenuity of his character which makes the idea of being a scholar inclusive and dynamic. The essential human element of unprocessed creativity leads towards the beauty of natural order of artistic disposition. When Nash's high school chemistry teacher used to propose a problem "all the students would get out a pencil and a piece of paper. John wouldn't move. He would stare at the formula on the board, then stand up politely and tell the answer" (38). Nash tried to experience the emotions for a thing before he actually put hands down on it.

In the film *Good Will Hunting* directed by Gus Van Sant is the story of a 'mystery math magician' whose instincts play on him and the most difficult of the problems are solved easily because of the acquaintance he had with the language of mathematics. Working as a cleaner in MIT, he could solve the problems given to the students of MIT on the board and nobody would get to

know of the mystery man. Will, the young genius knew the importance of freedom to work with full potential. His ideas on liberty are reflected in the court scene when he says, "liberty is a soul's right to breathe. Without liberty man is a syncope." For a genius to work on ideas it is important to have a mind free from any obstacles. He gives the examples of Mozart and Beethoven, who would just play piano at its first sight, so would Will do when a mathematical problem came his way. He would just play on it. He would solve the problems of music of his struggling girlfriend in an hour on a tissue and give them to her to extend the hours of being together. The beauty of mathematics is highlighted in the film in Prof. Gerald Lambeau's words, an MIT professor who recognises the capabilities of this magician; "A difficult theorem can be like a symphony. It's very erotic." These forms can be comprehended at the level of experienceto create imaginative abstract patterns.

In the film Amadeus (1984) by Milos Forman, a fictionalised biography of the great Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Antonio Salieri, got stuck with the limited curtailed and narrow domain of human sight. His failure to compose the music of divine significance even after praying to God day and night frustrated him to the core. On the other hand the misfit Mozart impressed everyone with his musical insights and spontaneity. The jealous Antonio knew of the merits of Mozart and gave a passionate monologue in his praise remarking:

> It was beyond belief… He had simply written down music already finished in his head…and music… finished as no music is ever finished. Displace one note and there would be diminishment. Displace one phrase and the structure would fall… Here again was the very voice of God.

Salieri calls it "meticulous ink strokes. An absolute Beauty." The impenetrable heads could not acknowledge him and behaved with him like an outcast. Nash was always so occupied with his thoughts that he failed to realise the presence of the people around him. His arrogance and antagonistic behaviour alienated him from the people and at the same time equated him more intensely with mathematics. He did not limit himself by simply observing but was an active participant. The musicality of his life was encapsulated in these unreasonable acts. Nash would whistle passing by the campus of the university which Warren Ambrose, a distinguished topologist tells his musical friends as, "Nash's whistling

was the purest, most beautiful tone he had ever heard" (163).

After the death of Nash's father he wrote a letter to Michael Artin, the son of a Professor in Princeton which started of with mathematics, followed by stamps all over and later as Artin says, "It was about Kochel's numbers for Mozart symphonies. Kochel had catalogued all of Mozart's works, more than five hundred" (281). The natural music of Nash is what encapsulates the irrational naïve of Nash. His life is musically described in the book *The Music of the Primes* by Marcus Du Sautoy as, "It is like creating a wonderful story or a piece of music which truly transports the mind from the familiar to the unknown" (33).

Non-equilibrium Harmony

> Polonius: Though this be madness, yet there
> is method in't. (Shakespeare 2.2. 207-208)

The seeming madness in Hamlet is a form of philosophical elation of a highly sensitised being, struggling within the structures of normality. Irrational and rational are two contrary ideas, but irrational has a rationale too. The modality of the irrational due to the continuous movement has to be dealt in with abstractions. Although Nash's equilibrium is not a pursuit to find the ultimate. But it is a closest possibility in the unimaginable market of chaos. Not reaching the ultimate equilibrium point is not and should not be the point of concern. Equilibrium as perceived in the common language is not what the journey of life is about for the irrational beings, because the beauty lies in harmony. And Nash's discovery is in complete harmony like his Beautiful Mind. Arvind Kumar in the book *Chaos, Fractals and Self-organisation* elaborates on the idea of equilibrium saying:

> In equilibrium, opposing forces or factors balance out and the system has a fixed, inert behaviour. A book on a table is an example of inert equilibrium of the force of gravity and the reaction force of the table on the book…Equilibrium means the system remains at a fixed point in a phase-space…. Equilibrium in a simple case of more general notion of a steady state. (88)

Harmony on the other hand is not a static state. It has patterns and polyphonic complexity and coordination. Nash's equilibrium complexity lies in it being harmonious. The contrast here is drawn on the basis of general ideas of

association of equilibrium with rational static behaviour of great admiration which becomes a yardstick to judge the sanity of a person.

The mad pursuit of Nash behind his naiveté created an ambivalence in the ideas of sanity and insanity. He becomes a genius in the guise of a madman.The Greek art before its encounter with the Dionysian, was artless and full of appearances. The artist continuously contemplated about the work instead of merging with it. Apollonian had the comforting spirit which took away the intensity much needed. It contained within itself the "apprehension of form" (Nietzsche 15). The Apollonian talks about the "measured restraint" which bounds within the calculated territory to restrain human being from becoming a philosophical entity. It takes away the beauty of spontaneity and unfathomable endeavours of a human being. The Dionysian on the other hand has the essence of eternity; "Man is no longer an artist, he has become a work of art: the artistic power of the whole of the nature reveals itself to the supreme gratification of the primal Oneness amidst the paroxysms of intoxication" (18). It becomes an alternative to elevate an individual. In the Dionysian state the boundaries between individuals are broken. The unseen reality which lies underneath is realised by the Dionysian. People who do not realise the essence of life and are caught up in the measurable moulds are, "Such poor wretches cannot imagine how anaemic and ghastly their so called 'healthy-mindedness' seem in contrast to the glowing life of the Dionysian revellers rushing past them." To be one with the primordial one must submit to the Dionysian madness which goes beyond social barriers and any narrow perspective.

Nash transcended the Apollonian structures to enter into the Dionysian world of liberation which Friedrich Nietzsche talks about in the book *The Birth of Tragedy.* It was the narcotic effect of numbers which became a tool for him to think and express his thoughts of quest to unveil the unknown. Going beyond good and evil was his union with the primordial. In the process of going beyond the mundane he tried to create patterns in the world of chaos. Dionysian gave him the spontaneity which offended the people around him who mostly failed to understand his cognitive beauty.

Donald Newman, a mathematician at MIT said, "Everyone else would climb a peak by looking at a path somewhere on the mountain. Nash would climb another mountain altogether and from that distant peak would shine a

searchlight back onto the first peak" (Nasar 12). Nash surpassed the ordinary ways to find new paths and explored his journey of mathematics through variate paths. It is the collective responsibility to comprehend the sensitive mindand create a space for beautiful ideas to take form.

Isaac Newton, always suffered an eccentric and solitary soul, he apparently suffered a psychotic breakdown with paranoid delusions at the age of fifty-one. Stephen Hawkings, the great scientist, was suffering from ALS, a neuro muscular disorder in U.S. known as Lou Getirig's disease and continuous physical decline. He would survive against all odds because as Jane, Hawkings care taker says "Stephen doesn't make any concessions to his illness, and I don't make any concessions to him." Hawkings worked on an intense pace, putting great demands on himself and expected everyone else to with the same energy and drive. In the film *The Theory of Everything*, we come across: "If to be mad is to be eerie, what is to be in the eyes of the world and having the experience in which you have a sense of revelation and features of the other people seem to be too stupid, to blind to recognise." Such brilliant madness contributed to the mathematical canvas which stands frameless on the easels of mathematicians like Nash. He defined his story through mathematics and found a metaphor "B squared + RTF= 0" for his life which was "very personal" to him (167). Siegel says, "He knew number theory like mad", "Diophantine equations were his love."

Nash was age concious, as Felix Browder recalls, "Would tell me every week my age relative to his and everybody else's". It was the heightened stage of imagination which led to delusions and other paranoid state of Nash which was soon declared to be an illness and Nash, a misfit in public gatherings. Nash referred to his delusional states as "the time of my irrationality" and during that period he played the role of a thinker, theorist and a scholar who would indulge into the complex phenomena (Nasar 326). He was negotiating with ideas and was trying to struggle to draw certain outlines. Libertarian views of Thomas Szasz, the American psychiatrist are put as, "insanity was a social construct rather than a symptom of disease" (305). This insanity might not be an equilibrium point, but it'll be too jarring to call it cacophonic. This insanity has the beauty to create harmony. It has an eye to see through the patterns in the irrational cosmic construct. Nash's Nobel Prize in Game theory is itself a way to predict the

equilibrium point which has its own uncertainties and unpredictability.

Nash's irrational naïve could not comprehend the idea of geographical boundaries unlike a rational mind. He soon became an outcast named "undesirable alien". His philosophical leaps created problem for him to the extent that he had to visit police station two or three times in a day. He was even arrested many times for not carrying a passport. In his mind he "was now a stateless, a man without a country; in the eyes of the authorities, he was a man without proper documents, which placed him in a vulnerable situation" (276). He even requested for a refugees status. His shift from America to Europe gave him a freedom to go to extremes of changing his identity and starting afresh with new perspectives. He desired to cut himself from the hangover of his past social self. Nasar writes, "Having resigned his professorship, having left not only Cambridge but the United States, and having given up mathematics for politics, he wished quite simply, to shed the layers of his old identity like so many outworn articles of clothing" (270).

Nash's imagination of a world government and the concept of a world citizenship was a thought based on unified world which made him a loner because of the people who were caught up in boundaries it became difficult for him to convey his idea rationally. "To effect his makeover, he wished to trade his American passport for some more universal identity card, one that declared him to be the citizen of the world"(271). Nash sings along John Lennon the idea of a world without boundaries. John Lennon dreams of a world of brotherhood in the song "Imagine":

Imagine there is no heaven
It's easy if you try
No hell below us
Above us only sky….
Imagine there's no countries
It isn't hard to do
Nothing to kill or die for
And no religion too
Imagine all the people
Living life in peace…

In his isolated working, Nash was trying to become a collective being of humanity

at large. He worked towards the civilisational growth of an undivided society. The utopian aspirations of Nash distanced him from the normalities of life. The beauty of the irrational thought behind the idea is laughed out loud at its impracticality. Robert Frost extends the thought through philosophical perspective in the poem "Mending Walls". Although Frost creates an ambiguity in the idea of "wall makers" and "wall breakers" but there are lines which bring in the larger idea of an undivided world. Boundaries once created no longer remain just geographical, but they extend their division between human beings. The content of trust and mutual understanding is lost soon. Even if they are "walled in" or "walled out" they are forced to stay away from the immediate environment.

Boundaries are not nature's creation. There is something unnatural about walls and nature tries to break through these constructed walls. For example, the highest and most expansive mountain ranges of Alps unites the entire Europe with its range. Alps spreads over the entire Europe sub-divided into small countries; Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Slovenia and Switzerland to break the seemingly walled range. Frost suggests that there is some non-human agency which protests against the formation of these walls and wants them to be broken. Nash worked for collective humanity at large. He feared, that his discoveries might be used for wrong purposes and therefore faced continuous paranoia. Frost says in the poem "Mending Walls":

> Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
> That sends the frozen-ground-swell under it,
> And spills the upper boulders in the sun;
> And make gaps even two can pass abreast. (1-4)

The sound minds of the people who claim for maintaining equilibrium by creating walls therefore become objects of suspicion under such affirmations. The laws of freedom are curtailed under such restrains. Their well-reasoned argument tries to defend its superiority of logic by giving superficial statements of fencing the land to maintain peace.

In the film *Pi* or *ð* by Darren Aronofsky, Max Cohen, a mathematician like Nash suffers from headaches, paranoia, hallucinations and social anxiety disorder. He understands the world around him through mathematics and says, "Mathematics is a language of nature. Everything around us can be understood

through numbers. If you graph the numbers of any system, patterns emerge. Therefore, there are patterns everywhere in nature." This beautiful mind is full of passion for patterns and observes nature closely to find answers to the mysteries unresolved so far. Nature becomes a guiding source to the mathematical ideas. One of Cohen's café friend, Lenney Meyer who is also a Hasidic Jew mathematician doing his research on Torah talks about the people's belief in Torah and elaborates by saying, "Thought is just a long string of numbers. Some say there is a code send to us by God." He finds out that Hebrew is all mathematics and numbers. He describes that how the mathematical notations of the words mother and father, 2+1 and 40+1 respectively, when added together, gives the answer 10+30+4=44 which is the mathematical notation for child.

The film is about the beautiful mind of a mathematician trying to understand the world through his vision conceived in the language of mathematics. John Nash like Cohen was observant of the nature and through his silent observations, tried to unravel the unseen mysteries of cosmic design. Nash would get lost in his thoughts so much that he would not realise the presence of people around him. He would walk around whistling all the time, and saw insanity as one of the properties of the irrational numbers which has the potential to capture the beauty of nature. Cohen finds while researching on 'ô' that everything is infused in a spiral which is like the formation of the symbol itself. The patterns of the smoke, the spirals of the fluid i.e. the tea he takes, the shell he finds on the beach etc. are all following the pattern belonging to the same design which incorporates all in one umbrella.

Cohen and Robenson's debate once led them to argue about the oppositions of being insane versus genius where Robenson calls it insanity on one hand and Cohen regards it as a genius. Insanity which has its manifestation in the naiveté, one of the attribute of the irrational is the major characteristic of a Genius who goes beyond Robensons' and creates standards for the generations to follow. Cohen and Nash both were able to transcend their medically detected conditions of being paranoid and schizophrenic as they both were able to connect their illness as per the medical approaches with the mathematical problems. Nash found mathematical answers for his paranoia condition. And Cohen was able to draw connections of his headaches with the 216 digit number which he had been struggling with since long.

One of the Italian immigrants in Princeton discussed about Nash's handwriting that Nash required ruled sheets during writing because without that his script formed a "very irregular wavy line". Nash might require a direction like the ruled lines to control his frenzied thoughts but that didn't take his efficiency for writing. Language is a medium to convey and concretize the ideas. It can have multivariate directions. The normative ways, when transcended, a noise is generated which disturbs the peaceful course. The standards of the social environment become a hindrance in the chaotic journey of the irrational minds who could not confine completely with the principled laws of the world.

Conclusion

The arrogant, indifferent behaviour of Nash has its manifestations in wisdom which is rooted in the irrational. Love is the outcome for wisdom. Annoyance will happen only when there is a desire to grow rationally. And child is not developed in these constructs but stays a naturally evolved being, unhinderedby synthetic growth. A highbrow will lead towards detestation and hatred, which is an outcome of pure rational conduct. Mind affected by hatred is doomed and that hatred eats up the creativity which tries to find its way through the infected mind. W.B. Yeats in the poem "A Prayer for my Daughter" says:

> Yet knows that to be choked with hate
> May be of all evil chances chief.
> If there's no hatred in a mind
> Assault and battery of the wind
> Can never tear the linnet from the leaf.
> Intellectual hatred is the worst,
> So let her think opinions are accursed. (52-58)

Yeats prays for his daughter to not to be a by-product of this hatred which will ruin her as a human being and will be a hindrance in the beautiful journey of her life. He wants his daughter to embody wisdom and joy. Intellectuals will reject and will indulge into a one-way study. But it is the angry mind without any kind of animosity, which will negotiate with the world for better prospects. The angry mind is a courageous soul who surpasses obstacles and believes in dynamicity of the world. The binaries of sane and insane are blurred because of philosophical engagements. The creative Nash raised himself to indulge into

a 'ceremonious' festivity.It is the harmonious pursuit to achieve that equilibrium which keeps one engaged with the idea of infinity. It is like the parallel lines which do meet but at infinity.

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A Review of *The Better Man* (by Anita Nair)

Garima Goyal

The Better Man by Anita Nair is a well crafted story that exhibits and explores an absolute picturesque quality of local (regional) setting and cultural belt of the Malabar. The reader is able to ascertain landscape- geography, environment-ecology, history-time and culture-society of North Kerala through author's fine sense of understanding of the state. The plot is set in the imaginary village of Kaikurussi which is an amalgamation of author's childhood memories, experiences and imagination. Geo-physically, the village is surrounded by lowlands, fields, backwaters, distant hills and a mountain. The author also draws upon historical, cultural and social readiness of the area through her finely painted characters such as Mukundan, One-screw-loose (Nair 6) Bhasi, Power house (Nair 4) Ramakrishnan, Postman Uni, Che Kutty, Achuthan Nair, Kamban, Philipose, Meenakshi, Anjana, Valsala and Damayanti along with other minor characters. The focus is on every human attempt to find inner peace and bliss, desire to connect with one's own past, longing for true love and understanding of human relationships. On the other hand, the work correspondingly outlines social complexity, vigorous individuality, externalities-internalities and personal and social space in one's life by analyzing socio-spatial geography of the region.

The story revolves around an elderly bachelor and a retired government employee Mukundan Nair who is forced by circumstances to return to Kaikurussi, the village he was born in and which he had left at the age of 18. On his return, firstly, he is haunted by the sense of remorse for leaving behind his mother and secondly, for not living up to his father, Achuthan Nair's hopes and dreams. Even in his 90s, Achuthan Nair is a formidable man whom Mukundan still does not have the courage to oppose. Despite his troubled personal life, Mukundan is also observed to be constantly driven by societal pressures throughout. The second major character Bhasi or One-screw-loose-(Nair 6) Bhasi (as addressed by the villagers) is a well educated man who has migrated to Kaikurussi in order to find an escape from the expectations of the world. He came to this village because here nobody knows him or his past or his unpleasant memories. He is a house painter in this village and practitioner of mongrel system of medicine.

Bhasi is profoundly affected with Mukundan's affliction and decides to mend cracks in his much-battered psyche. The local big-wig Power House Ramakrishnan, on a cruel whim, determines to build a community hall in the village and chooses Bhasi's land for it. When Bhasi refuses to give away his land, Power House Ramakrishnan threatens him, destroys his business and throws him out of the village. Correspondingly, Mukundan ensures to save Bhasi's home but soon gets swayed by Power House Ramakrishnan's flattery. The latter, however, knowing what kind of a man Mukundan is and how easily he would cease to flattery, uses it as his weapon to skim Mukundan's objections and wins his trust. Mukundan betrays his friend Bhasi and alienates Anjana, the woman he is in love with. Anjana is still married to another man. Therefore, Mukundan assumes that his love for Anjana would not be considered suitable by the villagers. For the sake of maintaining his higher standing in the village, Mukundan fails to listen to his inner self and does injustice to his companions. It is only after his father's death that Mukundan realizes his mistake and decides to amend it. He offers his piece of land to Bhasi and finally asks Anjana for marriage. At the end it is observed that Mukundan is going towards community hall building with a pouch of gunpowder in his pocket. The novel "from the start has been bound up in the local, the "real," the present, the ordinary day-to-day of human experience" (Welty "Place in Fiction"). It evaluates time, history, space, sexuality and situation of the Malabar society.

"Place in fiction is the named, identified, concrete, exact and exacting...gathering spot of all that has been felt, is about to be experienced, in the novel's progress" (Welty "Place in Fiction"). It is the bearer of imagination. The plot which adjoins author's perception to reader's illusion is built on the in-between situation of man's social inclusion and exclusion in which relationships, feelings and influences of both the author and the reader are immensely absorbed. Thus, landscape, place and space are inherently social processes. It is associated with man and his current approach towards life. What is at issue here is the indefinite connection between man, his history, actions and spatial-temporal aspects in real and fictional world. The past life and experiences of every individual directs his present action and behaviour. *The Better Man* comes alive with Nair's remarkable perception and her ability to envision the rich locale, flora and fauna and social lineage of ancient Malabar. The fictitious village of Kaikurussi is a dynamic space where relation between nature and

society, society and human being and the human built environment are examined comprehensively. The author exercises upon the geo-historical and cultural facets of the regional space. She describes the everyday struggle of people of Kaikurussi and the strategies they adopt in order to bargain their identity, dignity and crises in their daily lives. The prospect of material world and its working becomes the focus of attention. It illustrates the diversity and plurality of the region. The characters are heterogeneous in nature and carry their inhabited distinct origin and history as a part of their lives. The issues of caste discrimination, societal differences, race and ethnicity are being questioned. The matter of displacement, location and cross-identity are also subject to problem. The narrative moves back and forth in time. The characters are crumbled in their present and past. And the history unfolds within social geography of the region. The power of movement within time blends one moment with another hence creating a series of incidents and history.

The author provides a pleasing allusion of the age in which the reader lives and the age the reader has evolved from. The work is thus "reconciliation between formal abstractions about space, on the one hand, and the physical and social spaces within which we live, on the other" (Aitken 171). The refracted intentions of the author become direct intentions of the characters. It operates on the ideology of here and now or past made here and now. Nair observes that people and their family lineage, associations and beliefs are all consumed within their historical and spatial background. The peculiar geographical features of the village and location of the events investigates 'where' and 'why there' a distinctive system operates and how man becomes a landmark in that place.

The title of the story represents a journey of a man who struggles through his life for his existence. "Who was he? A better man...or merely an extension?...How can a man evolve into what he desires to be ? How can he stand tall...from his past" and create a new line of vision for himself? How can he set himself free? That was what he had to discover" (Nair 344). "Mukundan realizes that he was no better man. From now on he would do only what his conscience told him was right between the individual and society, he had made his choice" (Nair 351). On the other hand, Bhasi realized that "Everyman is guided by a force that is individual and unfathomable" (Nair 330). Man can heal, can make self-discoveries but he cannot fashion his future course. He has his limits and cannot change the advance of time and societal norms. The question

is not what it should be but what it is? Malabar is the place of myths, of stories, of spectacle and of representations. French Marxist philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre argued that each society creates its own norms, caste and gender system. The way of categorizing masculinity and femininity and these categories keep on transforming with time. The imaginary village of Kaikurussi is showcased as a qualified and commodified entity. There are different committees comprising powerful natives of the village. These men come from all castes and professions and are referred to as "VIPs in the village" (Nair 288). Besides, the social culture of Kaikurussi, it is eminently indigenous in nature. The natives are considered to be more worthy as compared to those who have migrated from other places to this village. Though, Bhasi had a college degree in Botany and masters degree in English language and literature but he is a migrant for whom "smirks, secret winks and hushed laughter are the coinage that dominates" (Nair 9) his status in the village. He is just a house painter so he is "considered fit for is just dipping a brush into a can of paint and slipping it on, this way and that" (Nair 9). Women such as Meenakshi, Valsala, Anjana and Paru Kutty are constantly seeking an escape from the mythological and stereotypical constraints. Paru Kutty tried to make her son believe that tyranny of Mukundan's father "was simply another expression of love and concern" (Nair 31). Anjana loved Mukundan truly but is densely seeded in the traditional and patriarchal values. She considers herself as "one of those old maids destined to remain at home. Unloved, unwanted, unfulfilled. Long in the tooth, sunken, cheeks and vacant eyes" (Nair 223). There are various illustrations in the story that highlights the rooted inequality, discrimination and social domination in Indian society.

What makes Kaikurussi meaningful is human experience. The characters are more physical and the place is more alive. For instance, Mukundan is struck between how he is expected to live his life and how actually he wants his life to be. He is always expected to take his father's place in the village, "He had hoped to establish his presence in the village. He had been certain that the villagers would be grateful to have someone like him with the city manners and knowledge of the outside world in their midst" (Nair 117). Along with this, there is a need to identify the importance of the status of a man which is at the same time central and marginalized. Similarly:

> In the course of thirty-eight years of living, Bhasi had chanced upon

> what he considered a universal truth: That all men are born with two faces. In his growing years, every man let his environment and temperament determine which one he should wear by day. Beneath the thin layer of skin, the everyday mask, there exists yet another face...that describes the anatomy of the inner man...the machination of the soul. (Nair 170, 171)

Metaphorically, for some this distant place is their personal space, their home. Such as for Bhasi, Power House Ramakrishnan and Babur Nanu Kaikurussi is a place where they choose to live their lives, respectively. On the contrary, there are others who do not belong here and never wanted to be. For Mukundan, Philipose, Meenakshi and Valsala, Kaikurussi is a difficult place. "Only those who can fathom it can survive here" (Nair 167). In fictional village of Kaikurussi, Nair has constructed a land that blends physical place, realistic elements and imagined scenes. It explores the shadowy sides of human psychology. Thus, Nair's work has evolved into a distinctive style of writing in which reality-imagination, history-geography and visual-virtual has consciously been worked upon.

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