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Editorial

Academic research and innovative ideas prosper and achieve new heights in an atmosphere free from restriction and compulsion is truly a valid and generally accepted view. Progress in research requires healthy and conducive circumstances more than remuneration, monetary benefits or promotions in jobs. A mind forced to think new thoughts and develop innovations is not expected to be as creative and productive as the one allowed functioning willingly and freely on its own terms at its own speed. Coerced into research activities, a scholar or researcher is not hoped to produce more than the minimum required to serve the purpose. It ultimately remains a gainful venture for the researcher only and fails to serve the society at large.

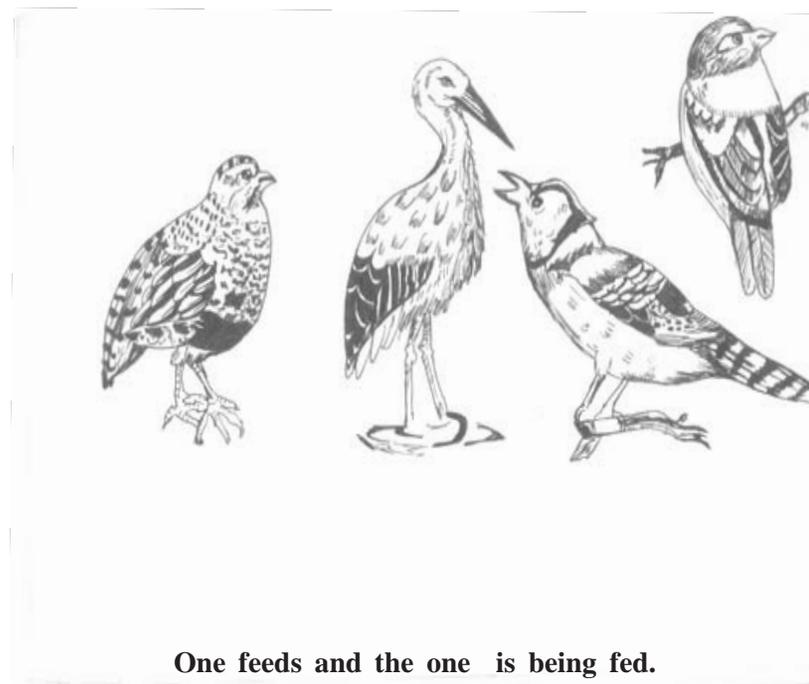
In the cotemporary Indian academic and scholastic atmosphere an unprecedented emphasis on research was, no doubt, a highly welcome initiative. It seems to have deviated from its desired goals as one finds academicians and educationists taking into consideration the number of research papers published, seminars or conferences attended irrespective of their quality and relevance for society or education as such. The increments, promotions and appointments linked to such research activities naturally prompt the scholars and the needy to get involved in or fall prey to the business oriented network that promotes pseudo-scholarship and tends to result in intellectual dishonesty. It is evident from the mushroom growth of journals and unscrupulous publishers and the publications meant to meet the requirements only. It neither improves academic performance nor does it enhance skills of the teachers.

However, it does not mean that research should be left to the choice of the scholars, the students or the teachers. Ways and means should be developed to make research a matter of willingness and interest instead of something imposed. Introduction of liberal but prestigious awards, separation of research from classroom teaching and academic performance related to teaching can be one way of encouraging more effective and worthwhile contributions.

In case, research activities are the result of the thinking that

those involved in higher education are to be made to do something additional, a better option would be some sort of training involving refreshment of learning and its evaluation through periodic courses. In order to save research from being merely eyewash that it tends to become as a compulsory activity, and maintain its dignity, relevance and real worth it should not be linked to career advancement in jobs.

N K Neb



Drawings by Prabhutee Neb VII B

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***Wide Sargasso Sea:* Beyond the Politics of Representation**

Dr. N. K. Neb*

Jean Rhys, born in Caribbean, was the daughter of a Welsh doctor and a white West Indian Creole. She went to England at the age of sixteen and lived in England and France for the rest of her life. She married thrice and never felt comfortable in her environment. Her life and experiences shaped her writings. In all her novels she focuses on women's struggle in hostile circumstances and crisis of identity, their cultural and sexual exile due to patriarchal and imperial oppression. Her major works include *The Left Bank* (1927) *Postures* (1928), *After Leaving Mr. Machenzie* (1930) and *Good Morning Midnight* 1939. Her novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* (Rhys, 1966) published after a long hiatus of twenty seven years won her Royal Society of Literature Award and secured place among the best 100 novels of the twentieth century mentioned by 'The Times'. It makes her reappearance on the literary scene more significant for she was rumored to have died during the war as reported by the BBC.

Like other aspects of her life that find expression in her works the rumour of her death carries special significance for the narrative of *Wide Sargasso Sea*. The guiding principle that resulted in the creation of this novel was her understanding that facts can be distorted and misrepresented. She talks about it when she tells, "My bitter enemy next door is now telling everybody loud and clear that I'm an imposter 'impersonating a dead writer called Jean Rhys'". (Rhys, 1985:64) A similar thing happened when she read *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte (1960) and it struck her that the character of Rochester's wife Bertha had been distorted and given a degenerated look. She decided to write her novel in response to this. She seems to be influenced more by the politics of representation instead of the poetics of fiction writing when we consider her views about this novel, "It is that particular Creole I want to write about, not any of the other mad Creoles" (Rhys, Letters: 153). She considers writing

the other side of the story as she feels, "I came to England between sixteen and seventeen a very impressionable age (the year was 1907), *Jane Eyre* was one of the books I read then. Of course Charlotte Bronte makes her own world... she convinces you, and that makes the poor Creole lunatic all the more dreadful. I remember being quite shocked, and when I reread it rather annoyed. That's only one side—the English side" (Rhys, 1985 : 296). She was also convinced that Charlotte Bronte was prejudiced against West Indies and treated her presentation of the West Indian life as misrepresented: "The mad first wife in *Jane Eyre* has always interested me. I was convinced Charlotte Bronte must have had something against the West Indies and I was angry about it. Otherwise why did she take a West Indian for that horrible lunatic, for that really dreadful creature? I hadn't really formulated the idea of vindicating the mad woman in a novel but when I was re-discovered I was encouraged to do so" (Rhys, 'Fated', 5). It brings out a purposive stance of the author in this novel and reveals her concern for the heroine Antoinette for being a woman and a Creole and the way she is made to experience marginalization due to patriarchy and imperialism.

The context of the writing of *Wide Sargasso Sea* provides authentic indications about Rhys' concerns and tends to make the critics analyze it as primarily a postcolonial text. However, the present study concentrates on the fictional elements that mark its extension from a rejection of Bronte's colonialist perspective to the development of a discourse that highlights the elusive nature of truth. Rhys' fictionalization of different incidents, characters and their behaviour shows that the artistic worth of her work lies not in politics of representation but practicing an effective poetics of writing. The aspects of this novel that function as effective fictive devices make it multidimensional, polyphonic and mark its movement beyond the politics of representation. The study in the first part concentrates on the fictional discourse that highlights the postcolonial nature of the novel, in the second it discusses the narrative devices that exhibit its artistic strength and tend to make it apolitical.

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Unlike traditional linear narratives the novel develops in the form of a complex maze of fragments, dreams, visions multiple points of view, mixing of past with the present and the plot registering a zigzag movement. These elements complicate the plot and make it difficult to decipher the story clearly. It demands a restructuring of the story in an ordered way before taking up its study. The novel is set in Jamaica during the 1830s when the Emancipation Act was passed and charts the end of slavery and downfall of the British imperialism and its consequences for the natives and the Creoles in particular. The novel is divided into three different sections, each narrated by different participant narrators about the happenings at mainly three places. In part one of the novel, Antoinette tells about her early life at Coulibri where she lived with her mother, brother Pierre, her stepfather Mr. Mason and a host of servants including Christophine who was a 'wedding present' to her mother. After the death of her father Mr. Cosway, her mother finds it difficult to survive as she had to look after her son who was a born cretin and a daughter whom she saw growing like 'a white nigger' and decided to get married again. We learn about their impoverished existence in the second part of the novel when she tells her husband, "I remember the taste of milk and bread and the sound of the grandfather clock ticking slowly and the first time I had my hair tied with string because there was no ribbon left and no money to buy any"(WSSp.84). Her mother and Mr. Mason go for honeymoon to Trinidad while she and her brother stay with their aunt Cora at Spanish Town.

Her mother's marriage to Mr. Mason provides financial security to the family but her mother suffers isolation and loneliness as her father Mr. Mason remains away from home for many days. She overhears the conversation of the people that her mother had killed Antoinette's father Mr. Cosway. They talk about her mother being a good dancer but also comment about Mr. Mason's real purpose in marrying Antoinette, "Dance! He didn't come to the West Indies to dance – he came to make money as they all do. Some of the big estates are going cheap, and one unfortunate's loss is always a clever man's gain" (WSS pp.13-14). Mr. Mason's talk about getting

new workers fuels their hostility and they set Antoinette's house on fire. Her brother dies due to the injuries received from this fire. They are forced to leave Coulibri. She is sent to live with her aunt Cora in Spanish Town. Her mother turns mentally sick due to the neglect she suffers at the hands of her new husband and the hostility of the natives that had resulted in Pierre's death. Antoinette goes to see her sick mother and finds her totally harrowed and unhinged. Her mother does not even recognize her. After this, Antoinette is sent to the Convent where she lives till the age of seventeen. Mr. Mason visits her often and one day he informs her that some English friends would visit them but he himself stops coming to her. It is in the second section that we learn how her stepfather had arranged her marriage to an English man with the help of his son Mr. Richard from another woman.

In the second section, the unnamed narrator Antoinette's husband, presumed to be the Rochester of Charlotte Bronte's novel *Jane Eyre*, takes over the narration that is intervened by Antoinette for some time. The incidents and experiences narrated here are related to Antoinette's marriage to Rochester, their honeymoon at a place called Massacre and their stay at Granbois where the growing tension between the couple takes a serious turn and results in her seclusion and imprisonment in an attic in Thorn Field, England. Rochester's narration focuses on the information he gets from Daniel, his wife's step brother that sows seeds of suspicion and gives impetus to his already nurtured dislike and hatred for her. Their loveless marriage is further threatened when he seeks to confirm the information got from Daniel about her mother's madness, her brother's death and Sandy with whom she was alleged to have illicit relations. Antoinette tries hard to win back her husband through her physical charms and by seeking help of Christophine who is claimed to be an obeah having the power to cast spell. Rochester expresses his dislike for his wife and openly admits to have had physical relations with Amelie, a young servant girl. It turns her into a drunkard and almost an insane woman. Rochester, who already had no love left for his wife, makes use of the situation and takes her to Thorn Field, England

to shut her in a room as a mad woman. It is in part three, the last section of the novel that we find Antoinette in the company of Grace Poole, the nurse engaged by her husband to look after her. The part shown typographically different is narrated by her whereas the rest of the last section has been narrated by Antoinette. She has been imprisoned like a lunatic. She was brought here without letting her know that she would be kept in a room, “I get out of the bed and go close to watch them and to wonder why I have been brought here. For what reason? There must be a reason. What is it that I must do? When I first came I thought it would be for a day, two days, a week perhaps” (WSSp.116). Her isolation and seclusion ends when she dreams of setting the room on fire and looks ready to enact it when we find her stepping downstairs with a burning candle in her hand.

The visible presence of the elements associated with postcolonial study in this novel make it fit for such a study. Jasbir Jain identifies such features in these words “Some of the main tropes of postcolonial ideology can be identified as the relationship between the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ which in itself embraces a whole lot of areas—the nature of encounter, the role of tradition and of religion, the economic power and social relationship. It also takes into account cultural formations and how civilizations are viewed by themselves and others” (Jain,2006: 22). The ideological tendency of the novelist becomes evident from the temporal and spatial setting of the novel. In order to make her novel an effective response to imperialistic representation the novelist has shifted the historical setting of her novel to thirty years later than the life depicted in *Jane Eyre*. The novelist does not mention the time clearly but one can infer it from the reference to the Emancipation Act, passed in 1833 and Antoinette entering the Convent in the year 1839. Bronte’s novel depicts life in the 1800s but the incidents that Rhys has presented take place from 1830s to 1840s when the earlier slaveholders were suffering for not getting the compensation promised to them in the Emancipation Act, for freeing the slaves and the freed slaves were forced to apprentice to their former employees. In these circumstances the Creole legacy of Antoinette and her mother makes them hybrid and they are forced to live in the ‘third space’ that

Homi.K. Bhabha considers “a site where a dialogue between different cultures is established and our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing unifying force,” is contested (Bhabha, 1994). But it does not happen so in case of Antoinette and her mother. Their hybrid identity fails to develop a dialogue between them and the two different cultures in which they are placed because of the assumed hierarchy of the cultures that operates through the Europeans like Rochester. Shima Peimanfard and Mohsen Hanif rightly point out a different perception of the working of hybridity in case of the Creoles in this novel, “In fact in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, to be a Creole or a “hybrid” is essentially negative”(Peimanfard, 2016: 16). Rhys’ situating her fictional world in a specific temporal and spatial context makes it an effective fictive strategy to show the way race and colour impact human relationships and make the hybrids lead a marginalized existence.

Their hybrid identity marks their failure to achieve acceptance in the social order. The hostility of the natives and the hatred of the white people turn them into social exiles and result in Antoinette’s sexual exile because of her husband’s hegemonic attitude and a sense of racial superiority. On the other hand, she fails to harmonize with the native blacks, “I never looked at any strange negro. They hated us. They called us white cockroaches” (W.S.S.p.7.). The following words further express these people’s condition in a society where they suffer due to the racial prejudices of the white people and the dominating position of the blacks for being in majority: “....a white cockroach. That’s me. That’s what they call all of us who were here before their own people in Africa sold them to the slave traders. And I’ve heard English women call us white niggers .So between you I often wonder who I am and where is my country and where do I belong and why was I ever born at all” (WSS.p.7). Rhys places Antoinette and her mother in such a situation that results in their loneliness, isolation and degenerated existence. All these details confirm that the Creoles like Antoinette were not suffering from innate madness as the colonialists present and treat as an inadequacy in them to be considered human. Rhys depicts them as victims of

circumstances rather than fundamentally inferior. It was Rochester's colonialist mindset that prompted him to consider his wife's drunkenness and mental disturbance as signs of madness in her blood: "To him, she seems to be simply another aspect of the West Indies' otherness. Rochester is not only a noble English man but also a colonialist, while Antoinette is just a woman living on the edge of being accepted either by the black people or by the white people" (Chen, 2014: 20). Their in-between existence is the cause of all their troubles and their behaviour that seems abnormal to the British imperialists. Rhys seems to suggest that the politics of coercion and assimilation that the colonialists use to justify their hold on their subjects is unjustified.

Another aspect of the colonialist thoughts of the British imperialists that Rhys contests is their self assumed role of soul makers and the propagators of the civilization mission. They often concealed their desire to acquire power over their subjects by associating their activities with religion. It helped them justify their expansionist designs and legitimize their oppressive strategies to subjugate the natives in the name of religion. In Bronte's novel *St. River John* justifies his working for the empire in the name of religion. When asked to relinquish the job of a missionary he expresses his views in these words, : "Relinquish ! my vocation? My great work?... My hopes of being numbered in the band who have merged all ambitions in the glorious one of bettering their race – of carrying knowledge into the realms of ignorance — of substituting peace for war – freedom for bondage—religion for superstition the hope of heaven for the fear of hell?" (Bronte,1960:407) . Rochester is one of these people who believe that all people other than the English were savages and suffered from inherent lack of wisdom and human qualities. Consequently, these people presented images of their subjects that showed them less than human in terms of the Europeans. In *Jane Eyre*, such an image of the West Indian Creoles is created in these words, "Bertha Mason is mad; and she came of a mad family; idiots and maniacs through three generations. Her mother, the Creole, was both a madwoman and a drunkard!.... Bertha like a dutiful child,

copied her parent in both points" (Bronte, 1960:317). A renowned critic G.C. Spivak also notices that Bertha, a Creole in *Jane Eyre* is depicted in such a way that "her function in *Jane Eyre* is to render indeterminate the boundary between human and animal thereby to weaken her entitlement under the spirit if not the letter of the Law" (Spivak, 1985:249).

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the novelist counters these negative perceptions through the character and behaviour of Antoinette who replaces Bertha of the *Jane Eyre* in WSS. For this purpose, she adopts a different narrative strategy. In *Jane Eyre*, Bertha's story is told by others who depict her as insane and savage whereas Rhys makes Antoinette speak for herself and keeps her humanity intact by suggesting how insanity is thrust upon her. Through the narration of Grace Poole also, the author tries to award a sustainable reason to Antoinette's violent behaviour against Richards. Grace Poole explains to Antoinette, "So you don't remember that you attacked this gentleman with a knife? I didn't hear all he said except 'I cannot interfere legally between yourself and your husband,' it was when he said 'legally' that you flew at him" (WSS p. 150). It implies that it is the word 'legally' used by her half-brother to suggest that Rochester was right in keeping her suppressed that she attacked him and not because of some innate madness in her. The novelist also suggests that, in fact, Rochester's cruel behaviour towards his wife is not the result of her insanity it is rather related to his understanding, "Creole of pure English descent she may be, but they are not English or pure European either"(WSSp.40). His dislike for the natives also comes out from his thoughts about the natural surroundings, people and the colours of their dresses in Jamaica, "Everything is too much, I felt as I rode wearily after her. Too much blue, too much purple too much green. The flowers too red, the mountains too high, the hills too near" (WSSp.42). The way he talks about these things shows his contempt for them.

While contesting Bronte's version of the character of Bertha the writer explores the functioning of power in the relations between the colonizers and the colonized. The relationship between them as

pointed out by Jasbir Jain marks the intervention of Foucauldian power-knowledge discourse, “The relationship between the colonizer and the colonized is one characterized by power and the production of knowledge” (Jain, 2006: 22). It implies that power controls the production of knowledge and the knowledge generated in this way reinforces power. Being a white English man Rochester assumes the power to create knowledge about Antoinette. As a colonialist Rochester exercises his power when he tries to eliminate his wife’s identity and force a British identity upon her by calling her Bertha. His attitude is like the stereotypical understanding of a typical colonialist towards the natives, “the natives either had to adopt his ways for being like him or they were inhuman and required to be made human according to his own standards. One attitude demands complete assimilation and the other means total rejection and subjugation”(Neb, 2016:3). Rochester in this novel wants to exploit the knowledge about his wife to his own advantage to homogenize his cultural other. The knowledge here is subordinated to power to ensure continued subjugation of the Creoles.

As a postcolonial writer, Rhys shows failure of Rochester’s attempts to keep his wife shut in a room and rejects his thoughts in clear terms in the last section of the novel. The knowledge inscribed on Antoinette as a drunkard madwoman stands rejected in her response to the whole situation. Her last act of putting on fire the room in which she is imprisoned as a mad woman and the way she exhibits her awareness of the whole situation presents her as a normal and sane person. Rochester with his British common sense believes that he could keep her shut in a lonely room as a mad woman. This belief of his and his confidence to have power to keep her subjugated stands exposed when Antoinette says, “ Now at last I know why I was brought here and what I have to do” (WSS p. 124) These words come out when she is out of her delirium of a dream. Her act of setting the things on fire is a conscious act of will. Thus all his attempts to keep her subjugated fail and she finds herself freed though in her presumed death.

II

All these aspects of the novel, no doubt, match the context and the purpose of giving voice to the silenced and oppressed character of the Bertha of Jane Eyre that tends to limit the meaning of the novel. Her presentation of the victim/victimizer syndrome in contextual terms no longer keeps the novel limited to its postcolonial perspective. The colonizers themselves experience marginalization in certain situations. Rhys shows Rochester as a victim of imperialistic designs of his father who sends him to the Caribbean to find an heiress. Her use of Rochester’s letters that lay bare his mind highlights that the novel is not just a rewriting of Bertha’s story to counter the images of Creoles in Jane Eyre. It also brings out the compulsions in Rochester’s life that tend to make him a victim of his father’s hatred for him. It gets expressed in Rochester’s letter that he rehearses in his mind: “Dear Father. The thirty pounds have been paid to me without question or condition. No provision made for her (that must be seen to)..... I will never be a disgrace to you or to my dear brother the son you love. No begging letters, no mean requests. None of the furtive shabby maneuvers of a young son. I have sold my soul or you have sold it, and after all is it such a bad bargain?” (WSS p. 42). Rochester expresses his frustration and in a way helplessness to come out of his unwanted marriage at a later stage also, “Tied to a lunatic for life –a drunken lying lunatic – gone her mother’s way” (WSS p. 106). Rhys uses such details to make her account of the life and experiences open ended.

The baffling complexity that becomes a hall mark of this narrative makes it a case for multiple readings offering plethora of conclusions. Seen from Rochester’s situation as a deprived son, Rhys’ stance looks sympathetic towards him. It tends to give a different meaning to the whole story. But such a reading remains inconclusive when we see that Rochester’s marriage may be the result of his father’s tyrannical attitude, but he himself could resist it. His behaviour turns out immoral and highly detestable; instead of protesting his father’s oppressive attitude he accepts this marriage as an easier way out of his financial problems. Apart from this, his

father's asking him to marry for money did not entail the condition that he should be cruel towards his wife. He himself seems to enjoy the role he has been made to play. Even before his marriage his attitude is fixed and he knows what he has to do: "It was all brightly coloured, very strange, but it meant nothing to me. Nor did she, the girl I was to marry. When at last I met her I bowed, smiled, kissed her hand, danced with her. I played the part I was expected to play. She never had anything to do with me at all. I wondered that no one noticed this. I would listen to my own voice and marvel at it, calm, correct but toneless, surely" (WSS p.47). Such an attitude is not a result of his father's pushing him into an undesired marriage and hatred for him. His sensual attraction and an overbearing attitude towards his wife is related to his sense of being different from her: "I did not love her. I was thirsty for her, but that is not love. I felt very little tenderness for her, she was a stranger to me, a stranger who did not think or feel as I did" (WSS p.58). This sense of being different and hence superior informs his thinking in essentialist terms and he comes to marry her only for money and to control her as a colony. It brings out the highly complicated nature of the fictional narrative constructed by Rhys that makes the characters and their life as complex as one finds in real life.

Another aspect of the novelist's narrative design is related to the politics involved in narrating the tales or telling the stories. Rhys' retelling the story of Rochester's treatment of his wife in *Jane Eyre* finds narrative parallel that functions to illustrate the way facts get distorted in the process of narration. Antoinette tells the story of her family being driven out of Coulibri when their house is set on fire by the native blacks due to their hostility towards Antoinette's family. But Daniel, in his account of Annette's second marriage, does not make any mention of the fire. In the same way, Rochester talks about his visit to Daniel and repeats what Daniel had asked him to do, "Give my love to your wife, my sister.... You are not the first to kiss her pretty face" (WSS p.80). However, he distorts the words when he makes them a part of his own version of the narrative, "(Give my sister your wife a kiss from me. Love her as I did-oh yes

I did" (WSSp.102). The ambiguity informing Antoinette's relationship with her cousin Sandy adds another dimension to the fictional discourse. At first, Amelie suggests an incestuous relationship between them when she nervously tries to deny this. But Antoinette herself seems to confirm this when she recalls her association with Sandy in these words, "Now there was no time left so we kissed each other in that stupid room.... We had often kissed before but not like that. That was the life and death kiss and you only know a long time afterwards what it is, the life and death kiss" (WSSp.120). These words imply the existence of sexual relationship between the two before her marriage to Rochester. However, the novelist keeps this aspect of Antoinette's life blurred. It allows the novelist to maintain an ambivalent stance.

The use of suggestive elements coupled with symbolic presentation of different elements forms another fictional device that adds to the charm of the novel. Descriptions in WSS acquire significances when we find Rhys' treatment of colours. At one level the colour imagery suggests incompatibility between the couple. The colour red is associated with Antoinette and her passionate nature that metaphorically challenges the dominant patriarchal discourse. She asserts her choice of red colour despite the realization that her wearing red dress makes her 'look intemperate and unchaste' to her husband who prefers her white dress that stands for purity and innocence. Antoinette's destroying the Thorn Field by setting it on fire also stands for her destruction of the patriarchal order as the red flames of fire signify her anger, passion and resentment that find expression in this act. The references to obeah related to the religious practices of the native blacks like Christophine carry implied meaning. This practice of obeah signifying spirit theft symbolically relates to Rochester's act of giving his wife a new name and trying to make her someone else. By doing this, he acts like a colonial obeah that steals the spirit of Antoinette and turns her into a zombie, living dead. As a mature artist, the novelist sprinkles such details for the reader to make sense of them in his own terms. It makes her own stance look neutral and objective despite her conscious attempt to give voice

to the voiceless woman of the Jean Eyre suffering from the tyrannical attitude of her husband.

The novelist's elusive stance thwarts our attempts to treat it as a typical counter narrative when we analyze Antoinette's role for her degenerated existence. A casual study of the novel shows that she is made to suffer due to the imperialistic behaviour of her husband, her Creole background and the stories that Daniel spreads about her and her family. The novelist points out a flaw in this woman's character that does not allow her to think of freeing herself from her debased condition. It lies in her not resisting her degeneration by her husband. She rather seems to accept her lot though not with indifference but of course with a strange kind of passivity that results in the inversion of her anger, resentment and protest. In the beginning of the novel, she talks about her dream, "I dreamed that I was walking in the forest. Not alone. Someone who hated me was with me, out of sight. I could hear heavy footsteps coming closer and though I struggled and screamed I could not move. I woke crying" (WSS p. 11). Such premonitions should have warned her and made her alert against the coming danger. Even when she finds her situation similar to that of her dream, she seems to accept her debasement and exploitation. Later too, she shows similar inactivity and lack of will to move out of a loveless relationship. Her marriage deteriorates and she goes to Christophine to seek her help who asks her to walk out of her marriage and go to some other place. Her insistence to stay with Rochester irritates Christophine and she tells her, "Why you ask me, if when I answer you say no ? Why you come up here if when I tell you the truth you say no?" (WSS p. 69). In the same way, she again refuses to free herself from the clutches of her husband when Sandy offers to take her away. "Will you come with me, he said?. 'No' I said. I cannot (WSSp.120) It is true that according to the English Law all her wealth is placed into Rochester's hands but marriage had not turned her into his slave, she could go if she so desired. Her behaviour makes Lucy Wilson comment, "Antoinette begins to resemble her predecessors in Rhys' earlier novels – Anna Morgan, Marya Zelli, Julia Martin and Sasha Janseen— in her inability to

choose personal integrity over financial dependency" (Wilson,1990:71) Her indecision to defy her marginalization results in her degraded state of existence that, in a way, reveals her dependence on her colonial other, her husband.

Antoinette's not making attempts to carve an identity of her own or struggle to achieve that is referred to as dependency syndrome in postcolonial parlance. According to this view only those cultures and people can be colonized that lack confidence and competence .These people have to depend on the colonizers as they suffer from an inherent inability to survive without taking help of the others. In Antoinette's case, she is more interested in following the ways of her husband instead of asserting her West Indian identity. Despite his oppressive and negative attitude towards her she makes all out efforts to win him back. She even wants Christophine to use obeah charms for this purpose. It marks a heightened sense of inferiority and dependence in her character. Her husband is a colonialist and a patriarch, no doubt, yet it is she who functions as an accomplice to make her plight miserable. Her attitude towards Christophine also reveals that she ultimately remains dangling between two cultural spaces and fails to identify with either of the two. Her own sense of being different from the people like Christophine comes out in her response to her advice that she should think of leaving her husband: " I stared at her, thinking, 'but how can she know the best thing for me to do, this ignorant, obstinate old negro woman who is not certain if there is such a place as England?'" (WSS p.70). Her thoughts and behaviour make us agree with Lucy Wilson's comment, "The ultimate betrayal in *Wide Sargasso Sea* is not Edward Rochester's agreeing to a loveless marriage for monetary gain, or even his infidelity with the servant girl Amelie; it is Antoinette's betrayal of her own with heritage, the submersion of her own West Indian identity in the rhetoric and attitude of imperialism" (Wilson,1990:71).

Even her presumed death by self immolation can be interpreted as her failure to achieve the desired higher identity through mimicry. She fails to identify with the blacks for considering them inferior. She nurtures a dislike and hatred for her black relatives for being racially

inferior. She displays her hatred for mixing of races when she finds a black servant kissing her mother. Hogan rightly points out that, “the racial dyad of white and black is always there at the back of her mind, always warping and structuring conceptions and relations” (Hogan, 2000). Her desiring and deriding black, white and hybrid does not allow her to succeed in acquiring an identity of her own. Her desire to assume the identity of her cultural other is revealed when Mr. Mason, “so sure of himself, so without a doubt English”, marries her mother she relishes it and boasts, “We ate English food now, beef and mutton, pies and puddings. I was glad to be like an English girl (WSSp.17). Even during her times at the Convent she endeavors to acquire her desired identity by trying to follow the ways of the young English girls there, “Please, Helene, tell me how you do your hair, because when I grow up I want mine to look like yours”(WSS p.20). Antoinette’s attempts here are not directed to topple the superiority of the colonialists, they are rather a sign of her desperate attempt to achieve higher social identity through mimicry that ultimately spells doom for her.

All the aspects of the novel discussed above point out that the novel is not a simple postcolonial response to the colonial discourse of Jane Eyre. Different fictive strategies used by the novelist exhibit her ambivalent stance. It can be summed up in the nature of the difference between her novel and Bronte’s Jane Eyre pointed out in these words, “Unlike Bronte arraying a narrative of inclusion where the protagonists are created within the scope of Englishness Rhys plots a narrative of exclusion where the non-English strives to achieve Englishness but it has disaster written all over it. Therefore, through its dual narrative, the latter regards scrupulous attention to the sentiments of the included and the excluded, the colonizer and the colonized” (Peimanfard, 2006:16). It implies that Rhys’ use of different narrative elements while providing voice to the silenced Bertha of Jane Eyre expresses multiple voices that seek authenticity and validity. It marks her attempt to rise above the politics of representation and look beyond fixed perspectives.

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Hegemony and Resistance : Contours of a Postmodern Consumer Culture

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Culture used to be peculiar to a region. It showcased the uniqueness of ethnic groups in a demographic region and reflected the ideology of a particular community shaped through ages of collective effort aimed to understand the all engulfing environment. It meant specialised rituals, customs, cuisine, dress up, festivities and a lot more. The identity politics of a tribe, a province or a later day nation derived its subsistence from culture. Any attempt at its dilution, amalgamation, alienation or pollution was taken as an assault and severely dealt with by its propagators or reservoirs. With the modern notion of 'All that is solid melts into air', its concreteness also got eroded. Diffusion of other cultures was so sudden and enigmatic that all the cultural boundaries lay suspended like particulate matter and the alien culture-specific norms corroded the sites of cultural unions and paved way for hybrid and mutated forms so strongly bound that any reversal seemed unimaginable. The postmodern world with its catchword of glocal witnessed a rapid urbanization with multicultural sites resulting in pastiche and the culture of corporate in stiff competition with the local hubs for daily exchange of commodities. In the absence of any localized places or cultural sites of purity, it is hard to determine whether a particular culture has homogenized influences, has undergone creolisation or is trying to resist the pregnable forces of devouring hegemonic cultures.

The new capitalist forces demanded a consumer who could be lured into a lifestyle suited for the market doyens to operate. The new lifestyle wavered between the extremes of high culture and low culture, touching the verges of popular culture, it attempted to redefine the contours of popular demand. The present paper is an attempt to trace the people's liking for corporate branding under the lure of advertisement and media with reference to the young children. Some

products of popular culture constituting food, toys and videos (media) have been analysed to study the effect of postmodern consumer culture on daily lives of working and middle class children in the third world countries and the benefit it generates for the elite producers of commodities in the first world countries and the resistance or unaware amalgamation of their lifestyles into indigenous cultures may be under the garb of over production by factories in South Asia.

(I)

The postmodern culture is closely related with the popular culture or the mass culture that oscillates between the boundaries of high culture and low culture. We have to analyse how this popular culture took shape and how has it reacted to the notion of modernity. Modernity, during world wars was an attempt at revolutionizing the process of production by industrial growth and technological advancement. The mass production of goods demanded huge quantity of raw material from the colonized world and dreamt of converting rural agrarian societies to viable commercial units. Venkatesam views modernity as 'separation of spheres of production as an institutionally controlled public activity from consumption as a domestically defined private activity'. It 'represents the rise of capitalism which legitimates the exploitation of both nature and culture for the pursuit of wealth accumulation' by creating marketable products.

The exploitation of colonies resulted in Anglicization of their culture, language, trade and daily exchange of commodities. The hegemony of Europe as a strong capitalist force took control of local markets and trades. The bazaars got filled with English products, quite cheap and fashionable. The high or the elitist culture, vested with aristocracy in their palaces, courts, mansions, private libraries and other personalized spaces was accessible only to the chosen visitors of the elite - - the remarkable politicians or the profound intellectual men. In 19th century, museums, concert halls, public libraries and art galleries were erected and opened to give the general public access to high culture. The norms for the propagators of this culture were so high and sophisticated that it was rather tough to emulate them and the newly risen urban middle class marveling at

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the wits of these men, revered and bowed in subservience to these European masters. As per Wikipedia, most of the public broadcasting stations like BBC, Radio 3, ARTE etc. were subsidized in Europe through funding by the government (High Culture).

Venkatesam quotes Lyotard who finds 'multiple realities' in the 'postmodern condition' with 'development of new forms of aesthetic consciousness and knowledge structures'. Modernity had failed to uplift the individual. During 1960s and after, America acquires centre stage in the postcolonial world and American corporations start ruling the world economy. Being a land of rootless people, the migrants had no culture or tradition to honour or value and they established a new social order where individual was more important than the social order. America became the home of mass culture. Americanisation was perceived as 'a threat not just to aesthetic standards and cultural values but to the national culture itself' (Strinati, 22). English proponents of high culture Matthew Arnold, FR Leavis and George Orwell criticized this as 'spread of democratic sentiment'; 'soporific pleasures of a superficial culture' and as forgetting national culture of 'the pub, the football match, the back garden, the fire side and the nice cup of tea' respectively.

America came up with a new popular culture of crime novels, jazz and rock music, films, adverts and fashion magazines. It 'offers a rich iconography, a set of symbols, objects and artefacts that can be assembled and re-assembled by different groups in a literally limitless number of combinations' (Strinati, 34). The postmodern world imitated American style and culture, adopted it to suit its own needs and converted it into 'distinct subcultural taste'. This taste is reflected as glocal—a mixture of the local and the global in the culture of China, Japan and India and some other emerging economies. India has a larger consumer market as compared to the other nations with more producers whereas China, Japan and Korea have turned producers of various commodities with China and Japan leading media and technology. The new danger proposed by Korean regime in military pursuits is increasingly meeting resistance from Trump. A new tug of war has arisen among corporate giants to hold massive

shares in world markets. Innumerable commodities are being produced and marketed by manipulating the consumers and the rat race to be counted among world's billionaires continues. Nayar analyses this Asian threat to Euro-American monopoly that came up with small batch customization. He affirms that ICT brought cash flow data in the form of information flow where money is data. There is no denying that China and Korea are fast competing with US and approaching Indian market as service providers for data flow. Google, Facebook, Instagram, Mozilla, Microsoft on one side and Chinese mobiles, apps and tabs to explore on other are getting a billion share in Indian market with new users for data. Amidst reports of data theft, demand for user privacy, high scale hacking at yahoo or facebook, honey traps by the new Arabian player on social networking sites, the data providers will surely rule the world market.

Frederic Jameson analyses this 'new economic order, the post-industrial consumer society, the society of media or the spectacle, or multinational capitalism' (Roberts, 122). It is a culture 'fascinated by landscape of advertising and motels, of the Las Vegas strip, of the late show and B-grade Hollywood films' (122). The reification of commodities has made the world fall for inanimate objects the possession of which is more important than human values. The capitalist doyens exploit and manipulate their consumers and many select the most vulnerable and gullible segment of the society, 'kids'. Herman Wouk analyses the effect of advertisement (marketing of commodities as daily consumable items) on adolescents in his essay 'A Talk on Advertising'. The scope of the present paper is limited to the effects of postmodern consumer culture on kids' items.

The producers of various commodities link their products with popular culture and work for the 'cultural dissemination' of these items. The elites 'controllers of mass media and popular culture outlets' (television, radio, supermarkets, McDonald's and Pizza huts, cyber games, popular music, films and animes, fashion and accessories available at malls) dull people's minds and provoke them 'for rebellion against the culture of dominant groups' (Popular Culture, thoughtco.com). Market forces dominate and oppress human

existence. Social harmony and group behaviour gets sacrificed at the altar of individual gratification and this gratification is perceived in a life style equaling the erstwhile high culture. This 'conspiratorial text', increasingly disseminated over TV commercials, youtube ads, billboards in busy market places, popularized over animes and films, videographed for songs and social networking sites, attractively displayed with schemes by producers of commodities, is readily available in ordinary life. It leads to 'cognitive mapping as Jameson calls it where individuals make mental patterns to understand their positions in the urban totality' (Roberts). The individuals totally lulled by the glamour of the market forces distort material reality of their ordinary lives and start occupying larger national and global spaces. How films, video clips, short status clips for whatsapp, lure of posting images to significantly record every single occurrence of our daily lives over social networking sites, uploading personal videos or audios over internet, participation in TV reality shows etc are increasingly working in this postmodern consumer culture to superimpose alien values on any individual, is beyond the scope of this paper. These are all modes of 'mediation' between the values and ideology exhibited by the third and the first world and between the class levels of society (Roberts, 144).

With the postmodern shift in economic needs from production to consumption, the market forces are 'encouraging people to consume' (Strinati, 236) and adopt fashion and style. The multimedia devices and the app developers for android publicize music, clothes, films, games, photo editors, food, readable quotes from a variety of thinkers across the world so that the popular culture is shaping our quintessential lives and the corporate easily gain entry into every nook and corner of the world.

As per Frankfurt School's theory of Modern capitalism, 'capitalist forces are capable of producing such vast amount of wealth through waste production like military expenditure that false needs can be created and met' (Strinati, 59). At the same time, government financial security system averts any economic crisis and working class people stay trapped in gamut of big corporate. With affluence

and increased leisure time, quick access due to plastic money, and global marketing by the brands, the strategies like 'upload your selfie with the product', 'win a trip to Singapore', 'sms the code and get entry into TV reality show' 'watch and answer a simple quiz' are tempting for working class consumers of postmodern culture.

II

Children are the most loved ones in a family and almost all the parents try to meet their demands. The sensitive and young minds are easily fascinated by the lure of TV, computer or mobile screen. At a stage, where they love to imitate the action of others and as quick learners, they no longer stay passive but assume themselves to be able to perform great deeds like their little heroes on visual screens. The advertising world has realized the potential of visuals to lure children into buying those products they don't necessarily need.

First, false needs are created by marvelous advertising over different media and then the demand is created. The higher the demand, the costlier becomes the commodity. The children unlike their parents give more weightage to immediate needs (false needs) and put up demands.

I have chosen five products for my purpose. First is Kinder Joy, a choco candy, produced by Ferrero SpA, an Italian company. Launched in 2001, it is sold in more than 100 countries and is produced at present in India, South Africa, Ecuador, Cameroon and China (Wikipedia). The Chinese and Indian editions come in two colours, blue for boys and pink for girls. Not only fixing colour for a particular gender, the candy also supplies appropriate toys in the eggs. There are little dolls and female cartoon characters in one and bears, monkeys and cars in other. To promote sales further, marketers share video on youtube where hundreds of eggs are unraveled to showcase the variety of toys embedded. And the famous hashtag like Cadbury—Collect all the five Pandas. Gendering the behavior of little children and creating a fantasy world where every individual child is a prince or a princess makes these products as the very postmodern.

The Italian company has placed Easter eggs in hands of the children across the globe and internet, TV adverts and billboards boost their mass appeal. The European hegemony finds resistance in America that bans the sale of this product under a federal law calling it a non-nutritional product. Is this a plain intolerance over the sales of a European corporate? And the local Chupachups imitating this Italian brand is no surprise.

American giant Fritolays is immensely popular with children. The American flavor with onion and garlic and the Spanish tomato tango find place over racks along with coca –cola in every small village shop or big shopping mall including railway and bus terminals. The popular culture of potato chips is fast replacing the healthy cuisine for the children. The local food processing units have proved similar ecological threats imitating European packing styles for their variety of products than the traditional paper or earthen packing.

The third case is that of Barbie doll with whom not only American but every girl identifies herself. The Barbie with its unlimited range of dolls with princess cut dresses, salon sets, kitchen sets, footwear and other fashion accessories does not allow any girl to imagine any other role except the stereotypical ones of homemakers or seductresses or wives. Strinati quotes Tuchman that ‘women are symbolically annihilated by the media through being absent, condemned or trivialized’ (181). The pop music and the fashion industry work harder to make every girl a charming ‘Barbie’. The TV animation series on Barbie confirms how patriarchy secures consent of young girls to the code of romance, code of fashion and beauty, code of pop music (Strinati, 203). The gown clad girls look forward to balls, outings in the outer world, fame as pop stars and play with hair and short dresses with pets as their confidants. The pretty gowns and the images of the little girls are uploaded on numerous sites and become a part of the society of the spectacle which as Debord describes ‘is the model of socially dominant life in all its specific forms as information or propaganda, as advertisement or direct entertainment consumption’ (Adargo).

Another is Japanese anime series ‘Beyblade’ where young boys engage themselves in tournaments of spinning the tops. The challenges they throw, the violence they exhibit, the natural forces including that of animals and birds they tame set norms for future male behavior. The girls are conspicuously absent in tournaments and perform the role of attractive, cheering fans. The content analysis of these clips and the influence they exert on society are a field for further research. The market forces lure boys with android games, metallic spinning tops, appropriate sports gear and aggressive male accessories that can only partake a winning attitude. America comes up again with resistance to the Japanese production and terms such characters as ‘superflat’.

Next are kids’ pop and rock music videos produced by Badanamu.com. The dance sequences by Penguins and chipmunks are “Po Pow Pay” and “Ponytail” the masculine and the feminine counterparts. Not only creating separate gendered private spaces for kids over internet, they also initiate them to free style dancing and rock music.

All the examples taken here are only indicative and not exhaustive. Numerous others are readily entering our daily lifestyles and home or work places that they seem to have homogenized with our native cultures. The obvious outcome of this consumer culture is that it has secured conformity of children and their parents to existing social order by meeting their false needs and replacing the consciousness for true needs. It has also led to erosion of nationalities by making popular the same clothing, food and taste for music or films all over the world. This has subsequently resulted in loss of collective and personal identities. Every child is Ash or Nobita or Barbie with a typical set of toys, clothes and food habits. The local brands like Bheem, Crax and folk art or music in local languages face stiff competition in the market and their manufacturers or producers try various strategies to escape elimination. How Chhota Bheem stands in defence of the local has been analysed in another paper (Goyal, IJMER).

Critics like Stuart Hall, Mike Featherstone and Ashis Nandy also explore aspects of cultural globalization, homogenization and creolisation under the impact of western media and consumerism. Nayar links lifestyle with consumption. He maintains that the 'consumer citizen' has an 'identity based entirely on what you buy or wear irrespective of other markers of identity' (122) like class, caste, ethnicity etc. S/he is linked to other people with similar taste for lifestyle. While stressing on the role of advertisements that showcase identity, based on lifestyle, Nayar calls the culture of Indian metropolises as 'media-driven, global consumer culture' (126) but with FDI in India and growth of supermarket culture, all Indian cities are in its spate.

The TV adverts set the roles, Thumbs Up or Dew for masculinity and macho kind of courage, Knorr soups and noodles for a working mother to satisfy hunger within minutes, Tommy Hilfiger for American yippee kind of wear and Nike for European rugby and soccer style. The effect of this creolisation of the popular culture in Indian market will be analysed elsewhere. These attempts towards 'the aestheticization of everyday life' (Mike Featherstone) have turned daily lived reality into a work of art.

To conclude the popular culture has erased boundaries between the high and the low culture. The culture of ordinary masses that arose as a resistance to the elusive, hidden, idealized and romanticized culture of the urban elite in pre-war Europe or post wars America gained hegemony in the postmodern world and seeped into all the sections and classes of the society with kids as no exception. The popular culture of food, clothing, music, pop and other visual arts has gained momentum and acceptance with the spread of ICT. The effect of the beautification of ordinariness as an artifact in a changed lifestyle has resulted in widespread creolisation and homogenization of cultures in the pastiche of postmodernity.

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Cultural Dynamics and N K Neb's *The Flooded Desert*

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Literature has been subjected to critical analysis through the deployment of multiple theoretical and philosophical perspectives concentrating on the external and the internal elements to understand its nature and artistic value. Despite their different approaches all the interpretations based on them are ultimately linked to the way we make sense of reality and the world around us. It marks a perennial relevance of the view that literature reflects life in one way or the other and traces the factors that influence life and its presentation in literary works including fiction. N K Neb's novel *The Flooded Desert* (2017) concentrates on the expression of contemporary social reality and the factors that have impacted it in recent years. In the process, it offers a close and artistic study of the dynamics of culture operating in the background. The writer has fictionalized the aspects of life in the Punjab in particular and India in general to trace the interaction of different cultural elements that define social behavior and determine people's attitude towards life. The present paper is an attempt to analyze the fictional discourse developed in the novel with a view to understanding the way it presents nuances of life that relate to the cultural dynamics and makes it a valuable document concerning the growth and development of society in recent times. The study concentrates on the forms of life fictionalized in this work that offers a different understanding of the growing culture evolving due to the interaction of the new material reality and the changing ideological world. It brings out the relevance of the fictional reality for its proximity to the life around.

The novel set against the strife torn days in the Punjab mainly concentrates on the life and sufferings of a middle class woman Devika who faces hardships due to patriarchy governed life and the conspiracies of her in-laws. It is through the life and experiences of

people like her that the novel explores the elements impacting life and its growth through a network of factors functioning in the background. The setting of the novel is suggested through the details concerning violence that played havoc with the lives of all the people living in this part of India during those times. Instead of using dates or historical figures the writer uses particular happenings, the T.V. serials like Ramayana and Mahabharata telecast during the times and specific violent incidents etc. The historical setting of the novel in the 1980s, as inferred from these details, provides the narrative a specific cultural context. In the evolving culture, Devika and her family experience forced displacement due to the fear stricken atmosphere pointed out in these words, "Passengers belonging to a particular community were pulled out of the bus and gunned down mercilessly. Bazaars now looked uniformedThe circumstances threatened a redrawing of the lines on the map tampering with the geographical boundaries of the Punjab"(p.42) Instead of presenting the political implications and causes of the situation the novelist concentrates on its impact on common people and their social relations. It was such an atmosphere where fear reigned supreme and the circumstances pointed out in these words, "No change. No respite. No hope. Fear. Suspicion. Killings. Encounters" (p.43), defined life. The exodus of the people from the village was the result of this situation. The novelist provides details of people's social and psychological makeup during the times informing transitional stages of culture and the way people respond to it.

The material causes resulting in the physical displacement of the people metaphorically imply a displacement in cultural terms as well. Devika's early life is shaped and controlled by the traditional social set up governed by patriarchal system. It forces her to accept highly immoral, inhuman and suppressive attitude of her family. Her moving to the city along with her in-laws is indicative of her shift from one culture to the other. She confronts a different set of norms followed by the women in the city. The novelist's presentation of the two almost parallel worlds that define woman's existence helps the novelist explore multiple layers of culture. It highlights the existence

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of multiple shades of culture simultaneously. It shows that the development of culture is neither smooth nor unitary at the horizontal axis. Neb's fictional world brings out diverse possibilities within a cultural context. Mutually opposed and incompatible world views related to society emphasize the view that, "culture is in a sense flat rather than hierarchical: it is a horizontal field in which different areas of interest mix, converse, cross over and sometimes fight with each other" (Ward, 1997:31). Whereas Devika remains silent against her marginalization the women in the city lead a liberated life. The thoughts of these women about marriage and family are extremely different from that of the people in the village and her mother who guides her telling "You are to look after your mother-in-law and father –in-law also. Keep your husband happy and cheerful. This is the only way to keep your married life happy and successful." (p.26). The women in the city are more interested in their individual happiness. They are assertive and aggressive. They are extremely conscious about their looks and bodily charms. Instead of looking after the family affairs and playing a subordinate role they are ready to revolt against their husbands as we find in the case of Lucky and Devika's other friends in the city. It shows that the potential for change and development exists in different forms. Devika's coming to the city thus signifies her arrival into a different cultural set up that exists within the larger cultural context. It informs the plural nature of culture and the way one aspect of culture impacts the others when we find Devika evolving a new personality under the influence of her new surroundings and companions.

In his presentation of the cultural history in fictional terms, the author concentrates on the development of new factors and their role in the progress of society. The unprecedented growth in technology and a revolution in the nature of communication form the elements that have brought immense change in life. On the other hand, the introduction of liberal laws due to the intervention of institutionalized form of democracy brought new perspectives concerning women and marginalized groups of society. The role of the laws meant to protect women against domestic violence, women's right to property

and liberal divorce laws skewed in favour of women function in a particular way as a vehicle of change so far as women's life in the traditional Indian setup is concerned. It is the result of these developments that Devika asserts her position in family and enjoys economic freedom after the death of her husband. How these elements have changed women's life can be ascertained from these words of the narrator about Devika, "For the first time she felt liberated. She enjoyed the feeling of being an owner. The joy of spending without seeking others' sanction turned manifold... Her purse richer than ever before had inspired her to go out and have a view of the world beyond the four walls of the house."(93) Her new found economic independence is the result of the new laws concerning woman's rights. The awareness that education has brought among women and the messages about different parts of the world flashed through mass media have added new dimension to life. The technological advancement has brought the world closer and the role of images has developed a culture of spectacle in which visuals carry immediate appeal and immense potential for change. The novelist shows a changed behaviour of Devika resulting from the intervention of these elements. Consequently, we find her a completely transformed woman. Devika does not seem the woman who used to seek her mother-in-law's permission even when she had to go to the market in the company of her brother-in-law. She now defies her in-laws' authority and ignores her mother in law's concerns, "She had stopped seeking her mother-in-law's permission to go to the market or visit her friend. While stepping out she would call out, 'Mother, I'm going ... I'll be back after an hour or so...Don't keep waiting for me'"(p.99). These words and the tone in which they have been uttered indicate her rejection of the mother-in-law's authority and her own commanding position in the family.

The role of media as a vehicle of cultural change forms a significant aspect of the fictional presentation in *The Flooded Desert*. The forms of life projected through different images and programmes are not limited to entertainment only. The way media affect life has been pointed out in these words "These media do not just carry

messages 'about social life' they act to alter or transform it" (Giddens,1994:5). In the novel, Devika learns about multiple possibilities of woman's existence from the images of woman she watches on the TV. The discussions and shows about women's rights and the way they indulge in activities earlier considered immoral have a deep impact on her. It makes her think in different terms about her own life and her position in the society and her family. It is due to the awareness brought by media that she starts asserting her rights and has second thoughts about her life. The novelist has devoted a part of the narrative to show how the media governed images have brought a change. Bansilal too realizes this when he finds himself helpless against the new developments. "He now felt his world crumbling. The fort of traditions and morality that he had kept protected as a custodian was endangered by unrelenting waves of change."(p.90)It shows how the new developments had transformed individuals and the society. The unidirectional nature of the flow of communication makes the people its consumers only. The audience have no role in the production or transmission of the information meant for them. Immunity against this communication is almost impossible; consequently sooner or later it affects people's life. The change in Devika's thoughts and behavior is partly a result of the images of women she finds on TV that encourage her to take bold steps and think in a different way. Her mother-in-law talks about the forms of life that she believes carry negative messages for women, "The entangled relations these serials show are beyond my understanding One does not know who is married to whom!.... They want people to become –disobedient children, disrespectful daughters-in-law and disloyal wives!" (p.124). In fact, Devika tries to enact media prompted fantasies and finds justification of her liberated and unscrupulous behaviour from the views and the codes generated through different programmes she watches.

Apart from the role of mass media the presence of N.R.I.s and the image of a glorious life they present forms a significant feature of the growing cultural scenario in the contemporary times. How their life and riches sow the seeds of a dream in the natives

for an ideal comfortable life promising immense happiness and pleasure has been fictionalized through the N.R.I.s like Sharda in the novel. The special treatment these people receive from their friends and relatives and the people in general has been highlighted through the way Devika, her friend plays a subordinate role just for her being an N.R.I. Her visit to the market also reveals how these people have a special attraction for the shopkeepers who treat them with exaggerated humility and respect. It has a mesmerizing effect on Anamika and she starts dreaming of going abroad and be like her. Her dream of a life of luxuries and pleasures in a foreign country inspires her to marry Grinder. The novelist provides ample hints through references to other incidents to show that the dream of a life abroad makes people indulge in highly selfish, unethical and strange activities. Their desire to go abroad surmounts all boundaries of morality and decency. Anamika's keenness to settle abroad results in her dumping her husband and son and getting married as a way to fulfill her dream. Another feature of life related to this cultural system is related to the mushroom growth of genuine and fake travel agencies. The enormous growth of the business related to travel agencies particularly in this part of India explores an altogether a different aspect of this culture. Unlike Diaspora writers harping on the troubles, sufferings and hardships faced by people living in alien lands, Neb concentrates on the charm and temptation their life and lifestyle has for the natives. The non-resident Indians, despite their occasional visits, exercise a very deep and lasting impact on the lives of the natives. The glorious and shining image of life they present makes the natives dream of a life of luxury and prompts them to adopt fair and foul means to settle abroad.

Religion has been one of the most significant and effective tools of social change since ages. In *The Flooded Desert* the novelist exposes the hollow nature of religion practiced by pseudo saints and points out the growth of a different culture commonly known as Ashram or Dera culture in Punjab. The activities of these religious centers and their followers gradually extend to politics. The functional forms of religion being practiced by different organizations have been

pointed out through suggested references like, 'eat spicy food and your luck will improve' and the religious head teaching ways of life instead of the way to seek spiritual peace. The use of subtle hints shows the writer's fictional skill and suggests the variety of activities that people falsely associate with religion. It makes the writer's satire on these aspects of life artistic, indirect and effective. The writer highlights the involvement of these people in commercialization of religion as they advertise themselves through film personalities, politicians and their followers selling C.D.s and DVD's containing discourses of God men. The political significance of such religious centers pointed out through the presence of politicians at these places reveals the role that these saints play affecting the democratic set up through the number of their followers. The growth of innumerable centers like the one where Devika goes to seek solution to her husband's impotence has become a hall mark of the contemporary culture. The details of the practices undertaken at these places in the name of religion point out the nature of religion practiced in contemporary times.

The depiction of a variety of women from the traditional ones like Leelawati, Devika's mother and her Bhabhi to the extremely modern like Lucky, Nalini, Anamika and the women who visit the beauty salons and follow a wayward behaviour contests singular and centralized understanding of reality informing woman's existence. In the new world order, woman is no longer considered a helpless victim of male tyranny and oppression. In *The Flooded Desert*, the novelist's concern for women's sufferings does not ignore the other possibilities for woman in the transitional phase of Indian society. Consequently, his perspective cannot be considered a feminist one in exclusive terms. Instead the ultimate view that emerges from the novel brings it close to Alessandro Monti's views expressed about Shobha De's novel *Socialite Evenings*, "Actually the novel might be easily viewed as a sort of subdued feminist manifesto, at a crossroads between the "Socialite" lure and the unredeemed nostalgia for lost way of life". (Monti, 2000: 29). The women characters in the novel raise their protest against their ill treatment, suppression and

marginalization. Unlike traditional Indian women they explore avenues of their happiness and endeavor to acquire a position of power rather than seeking contentment in their lot. Devika is seen indulging in illicit and immoral relationships and following a new kind of aggressive behaviour that makes her father-in-law comment, "We neither have any strength left in us nor do we have any authority over her. How can we exercise a control over her? She is the master of her own will.... I fear some day she may even ask us to leave!"(p.101).The cultural dynamics that the novel presents leaves little scope for a feminist sympathy for women and a rejection and criticism of the male behaviour. Devika's words at the ending of the novel are quite revealing and provide significant insights about the kind of direction the social life seems to take. Her words are quite suggestive, "But the recent rains have flooded the desert. These plants celebrate the floods, unmindful of the effects. They behave like the hungry, starved ones who indulge in overeating. Their need was rain, not floods."(p.231) In fact, these words sum up the impact of the cultural developments on women's life in particular. Women, no doubt, were extremely suppressed and experienced starved existence in terms of individual freedom. The floods of change have empowered them in such a way that they seem to have been dazzled and baffled. It is due to the emergence of a different cultural scenario that women experience an altogether different life than their traditional counterparts. The novelist's own stance here remains ambivalent and the fictionalization of Devika's degraded existence does not seem to be directed to build a feminist discourse.

In the new social order the working of power in man-woman relationship offers an altogether a different picture. The picture of society that the novel projects is replete with the incidents concerning woman's acquiring a commanding role. It may look startling and strange to find a woman like Anamika deserting her husband and son for the sake of her dream to settle abroad and the women exhibiting highly bold and unacceptable behaviour that we find in the novel. However, there are highly liberated and socialite women that one finds in real life as well as depicted in different serials and films that

makes the kind of life shown in this novel an acceptable proposition. The highly commanding and threatening role of woman viz a viz man is the result of the support women get from the legal system skewed in their favour and a new found awareness of their rights in them. Prompted by these developments Nalini challenges her husband in these words, "You know very well. You know what I can do! I've just to go and lodge a complaint against you. I'll tell them you abuse me and beat me often. You just see what happens then"(p.194) Because of these new developments Indian male sometimes feels subdued like Dinesh as these words indicate, " He was helpless. He often wondered how the lion in him had turned into a mouse...He felt ashamed of himself"(p.194). It is due to the changed circumstances that we don't find men in this novel behaving like tyrants in a cruel way. Instead of supporting a feminist perspective the novelist seems to share his fictional concerns with contemporary writers pointed out by Ashoo Toor in these words, " They concern themselves with themes such as the role –reversal of the traditional essentialist male and female categories, as well as the existential angst of each man/woman assailed by circumstantial dilemmas"(Toor, 2014:32). It implies that in the contemporary social structure the traditional equations of power in man/woman have been destabilized and contested. The understanding of these relationships now has to be refreshed.

The presentation of the transitional phase of contemporary social reality in *The Flooded Desert* includes the dramatization of the disintegration of caste based discriminations. The novelist provides references to the earlier times informing the prevalence of such distinctions through the inhuman and utterly unacceptable behaviour of the people because of the caste related distinctions. Despite the care the novelist has taken to avoid using the signs of caste the suggestive details used for the purpose are highly revealing and effective. The incident related to the boy Bikhu engaged by Devika's family to tend the cattle has been used to build a contrast with the role of caste in the present times. The discrimination that he has to face speaks about people's thoughts under the impact of caste based

prejudices. In the novel, Anamika recollects the incident related to the boy Bikhu coming to have food at their house. "He would come and sit just inside the threshold. Anamika's mother would drop the loaves of bread into his wide spread hands keeping her own hands above. It was done to ensure that she does not get polluted by an inadvertent touch against the boy's hands."(p.133). But later in their city house, a different behaviour of Anamika's mother towards Rajni, the daughter of an officer belonging to the low caste shows the change informing the development of a new world order. However, the residuals of the earlier social belief still persist. It can be observed from the behaviour of Leelawati. She is seen handing over the utensils used to serve food to Rajni to their maid. It brings out the fact that the earlier caste based discrimination has not disappeared altogether. Another dimension of contemporary social reality depicted in the novel relates to people's following discriminatory behaviour on the basis of class considerations. It reveals another feature of contemporary cultural reality. In an incident, the novel tells about an upper caste boy Golu. He is shooed away by Leelawati for being poor and is not allowed to attend the birthday party of the child Anamika. Ironically, all the other children irrespective of their caste affiliations are invited and treated well because of their belonging to the rich families. These details in the novel point out the redefining of the centers and the margins in the emerging cultural scenario.

In *The Flooded Desert* a crisscross development of plot despite linear unfolding of the story suits the novelist's design to give expression to cultural diversity. Devika's story finds extension into different directions that provide an opportunity to the author to include a number of dimensions of growing culture in the matrix of the fictional narrative. In order to express the multiple hues of culture the novelist introduces new characters in Devika's life . Their movements, activities and behaviour tell about a variety of experiences throwing new light on the complex fabric of human relationships. The novelist's achievement here lies in the way all these elements have been integrated with the life and journey of Devika. This makes the novel a journey into the cultural space marked by a number of trajectories

that constitute the flow of cultural arrangement. By simple extension Devika's story symbolically represents the story of India through different phases of its development. The way different incidents representing different types of life have been arranged in a single narrative develops the novel into a collage of different pictures of contemporary Indian life. For example, Devika's disappointment in marriage and married life in the village forms a picture of life containing the image of traditional Indian social life, her life in the city in the company of modern liberated women and her affairs with Devender provide a view of the disintegrating cultural ethos resulting in a different and new kind of society. The activities associated with life abroad and the pseudo saints conducting their dubious affairs depict a multi coloured picture of life.

Another structural element that adds to the artistic worth of the novel is the judicious use of different characters and the forms of life they represent. Despite the functional use of different characters and incidents as narrative units they express different dimensions of culture. The characters like Leelawati, Bansilal, Devender, Suraj, Sharda Aunt and the liberated modern women carry special significance even much after their physical absence from the world of the novel. Their role in the novel gets integrated into the fictional discourse so well that their relevance is realized as internal elements. They, no doubt, play a significant role for the development of the plot as structural units and as carriers of thematic meanings. These characters enter the novel at appropriate situations created by the novelist. However, their appearance in the novel looks natural and logical. The fictional arrangement of different incidents and the characters makes it an artistic whole because of the fictional skill of the novelist. Consequently, it develops into a well structured work instead of a novel with episodic plot developed on the pattern of Picaresque tradition of fiction writing. Of course, the sections of the novel devoted to the spectacle of life have the potential to develop into full length fictional narratives. The novelist has woven these potential tales into a single story so well that they form a well developed whole and do not give the impression that different tales have been cobbled together.

The Flooded Desert evokes already existing stereotypes and cultural codes to give an effective and useful expression to the cultural history of India. The novelist here uses these elements to build contrasts, reassert the accepted codes and show their disintegration into new ones. The gradual transformation of the codes depicted in the novel makes the novel a representation of reality that allows the readers to identify and understand them as they themselves find these things happening in their own life and the life around. Despite the appearance of a different code of ethics governing social life, the novelist seems to emphasize the renewal of perspectives and values rejecting the complete disappearance of the earlier morality. It becomes obvious from the way these modern, wayward women's behaviour has been criticized by the novelist through a number of hints inserted in the fictional design. M. Mani Meitei's words about Rohinton Mistry's novel *Such a Long Journey* are relevant for this novel also, "The novelist's predilection for the great tradition rather than for the modernist method of fictional experimentation with its emphasis on time and consciousness manifests his ideological stance of being a critical and socialist realist" (Meitei, 1998:102). In the novel, the persistent presence of dissenting voices that challenge the blind acceptance of the new forms of life have been used by the novelist to contest a universal understanding of life and society. While presenting the life of the liberated modern women that mark a rejection of the kind of life experienced by Devika the novelist does not offer it as an alternative way of life to women. His own stance is close to Devika's understanding expressed in poetic and symbolic terms at the end of the novel. Earlier too one of the modern women expresses her concern about the way certain socialites propagate disregard for marriage in the name of individual independence and woman's freedom from male hegemony, "They offer arguments to make divorce something desired. They simply don't allow you to explore chances of reconciliation.... I know how they function to advertise the number of divorces they helped materialize like bank men meeting their targets" (p.123) Devika's slow and gradual transformation into a new woman also indicates the novelist's understanding that the residuals of earlier

cultural ethos do not disappear altogether and nor do they become irrelevant. The change that we witness in Devika as well as in her daughter is neither sudden nor does it look unexpected. In Devika's case, her extreme marginalization, loneliness, exposure to the new world order and her own lapsing into judgmental thoughts about her behaviour as a new woman reveal that the novelist emphasizes the role of earlier moral code in defining life in a highly modern and different world. Devika's concern for these values comes out at the end of the novel where she is seen thinking about her life after having undergone a variety of experiences including her suppression and her attempts to seek happiness in her affairs with her brother – in-law Dinesh and then with another person Devender.

The cultural dynamics given fictional expression in this novel suggests the entrance of the Indian society into what Baudrillard considers third phase of the development of society and known as the postmodern culture. In this cultural scenario, "abstract qualities like love, goodness and knowledge, which had previously been thought to be immune from the operations of buying and selling, themselves enter into the realm of exchange value" (Connor, 1995:50). In this situation a special feature of culture appears in the form of the commodification of human relationships and finer human feelings. In this phase, use value instead of the real value becomes more significant. The circumstances in which Devika is married relate to the times when the values of the earlier phase are on the verge of losing their earlier hold. The stability informing the value system that determines people's conduct and its understanding gets destabilized. The social institutions like family and marriage tend to be redefined on the basis of the newly developed norms. In the developing cultural structure the evolving forms of life like live-in relationships, seeking divorce on flimsy grounds, and women's misusing the laws concerning domestic violence all inform the growth of subcultures that threaten to become the order of the day. The special feature of the signs of this new culture is that people now consider everything in terms of use value. It can be ascertained from the way women like Lucky, Tania and Anamika view marriage like a springboard to achieve their

goal of individual happiness. For these women marriage and familial relations are relevant only if they are useful to them.

The novelist's attempt to capture the cultural dynamics places him among the writers following the realist tradition in fiction. It can be ascertained from his use of simple syntax and concentration on minute details. The individual signs are thus understood immediately even by an inexperienced reader. The visual and referential use of language carries a sense of the reality being fictionalized. It makes the reader believe that the world created in the fictional construct is congruent with his own. It collapses the distance between the fictional and the real for the reader. The writer here draws on cultural conventions and stereotypes to build a contrast with the new forms of reality informing the cultural dynamics. Sometimes, the details used for this purpose seem superfluous and irrelevant as they slow down the pace of the narrative. These descriptions, in fact, construct an ambience of reality and the reader easily identifies it as he finds it matching with the reality outside the text. For example, the novelist uses the technique of cursory glance to provide a view of the feminine world revealing a renewed interest of women in their looks and body, "Lakshmi came back after two hours with her hair dyed, eyebrows done, face gleaming and arms robbed of even the soft hair" (93) The suspension of narration subordinated to the narrator's lingering on the details providing a view of the world of opulence and charm having a romantic appeal for women serves the purpose of registering the subtle but significant shades of the evolving culture. The narrator talks about such a place where Devika goes to attend a kitty party, "The uniformed waiters found their movements hectic and expressions more polite. Stone-studded fingers carried tidbits from plates to the lipstick smeared mouths making the eatables disappear speedily" (p.113). For Devika, the women inhabitants of this dream world become a version of the independent and intelligent woman that she aspires to become.

The variety of experiences, forms of life and reality rendered in fictional terms correspond to the picture of life observed in the contemporary Indian society. The realistic details and evocative

descriptions of the surroundings and narration of incidents in a way that carries a visual appeal awards a sense of authenticity to the novelist's attempt to map the development of cultural history.

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Theme of Corruption in Colonial Nigeria : Ekwensi's *Jagua Nana* and Achebe's *No Longer at Ease*

*Priti Deswal**

The two great novelists of post – colonial Nigeria who carved niches for themselves in the hall of fame were Cyprian Ekwensi and Chinua Achebe. Both were contemporary novelists and both made colonial and post–colonial Nigeria as the setting of their novels. Ekwensi and Achebe shot into fame when Nigeria had attained independence from British rule. Both novelists were grimly aware of corruption as a decadent element in post–independent Nigerian society. The British rule had corrupted the minds of the educated Africans and the corrupting influence of the British could be felt in every fiber of the society. Both the novelists made searching studies of the socio–cultural decline of Nigeria. It is in the fitness of things to make an analytical study of the theme of corruption in Ekwensi's *Jagua Nana* at the outset. *Jagua Nana* deals with an Igbo woman. In the novel *Jagua Nana* Ekwensi shows how several characters from the Eastern cities of Nigeria gravitate to the capital Lagos and invite problems in their lives. *Jagua*, an Igbo from Ogbu, in Eastern Nigeria, gravitates to Lagos for motives of personal enrichment. The psychological motivations of *Jagua* that goads her to abandon her home at Ogbu: her failure in her marriage to a coal miner and her inability to bear a child.

When the novel opens, we find *Jagua* as an ageing woman but she leaves little room for doubt that she is every inch a woman of fashion. People have nomenclatured her *Jagua* owing to her awesome fashion and exquisite looks. People give her the sobriquet *Ja–gwa* after the famous swanky British car. Her father a humble Pastor gets her married to a solvent and well meaning person, but she finds her married life to be dull and un-sensational. She decides to put an end to her dull married life and boards a train for Lagos, the capital

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city of Nigeria where she can gratify her lust and satisfy her cupidity for wealth.

In the city of Lagos we find Jagua indulging in various sensuous pleasures. She is irresistibly drawn to fine clothes and flamboyant lovers. Her decline in ethical standards becomes crystal clear when she begins to cling to a life of drinking and dancing. Ekwensi highlights the series of casual love affairs in her life. Though she sleeps with several men, her love affair with Freddie is genuine. Freddie moves to England for his higher studies whereas Jagua moves to her village in the eastern part of Nigeria. It is in the village of Eastern Nigeria that Jagua has a brief love affair with Ofubara.

Jagua Nanais Ekwensi's full length novel. Even a casual reader of the novel can find similarities between Ekwensi's *People of the City* and *Jagua Nana*. The novel shows a striking resemblance with Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders*. It would be in the fitness of things to mention that *Moll Flanders* is a prostitute by profession but Jagua condescends to the flesh trade for her lure of money. Ekwensi has chronicled the fierce life of the Nigerian capital of Lagos and it would not be out of place to label Jagua as the *Moll Flanders* of Nigeria. Critics Hawkins and July are point – devise in their comments on the ethical decline in the character of Jagua. Loretta A. Hawkins remarks, "Jagua was a free – spirited, determined, individualist, living her life free of codes of ethics, traditional boundaries, or tribal pressures; and it was this spirit of freedom that made Jagua unique." ("The Free Spirit of Ekwensi's, *Jagua Nana*", *African Literature Today* 203). Robert W. July remarks, "Jagua Nana as an amateur prostitute, not in the sense of lacking skill of eschewing remuneration, but in the sense of loving her work." ("The African personality in the African Novel", *Introduction to African Literature* 222).

Jagua had several adventures and misadventures in the city of Lagos. Her uncomfortable life in Lagos motivated her to move to Obabu Krimameh and Onitsha where she could start her life afresh. She did not hesitate to admit the many failures she confronted in her life in Lagos: Jagua rose and began to take off her clothes. She wanted to go home now, back to Ogabu. She wanted to go to

Krinameh to see if chief Ofubara would still take her. She felt a deep hungry longing for her mother. Lagos for her, had become a complete failure. She must try and start life all over again, but not in Lagos. If brother Fonso could help her, she wanted nothing better than to be a real merchant princess at Onitsha. (*Jagua Nana* 17)

Jagua's determination to eschew city life and settle down in Ogabucan be traced to her love for a traditional country life. She was doubly sure that she could live with her mother and assist her in the work of farming. True to her decision, she becomes the housekeeper, helps her in the work of farming and over and above, she gives her mother the much needed care in her old age.

In the course of her stay in her village, Rosa informed her how Uncle Taiwo was done to death in a conspiracy hatched by the members of his own party. The talk on Uncle Taiwo brought about some association of economics to her mind. At that very instant she recalled that she had received a good amount of money from Uncle Taiwo. To her utter bewilderment, she found hundred bundles of £ 50, as she kept on fishing for the money in her bag. Her heart was filled with feelings of thankfulness for Uncle Taiwo's generosity and benevolence. She decided to donate part of that money to the church and retain some amount of money to herself. The commercial city of Onitsha fired her imagination and she decided to start a business of her own in that city. After sometime she made a visit to the city of Krinameh where she was awestruck by the rapid changes in the skyline of Krinameh: Jagua saw not the Krinameh she knew, desolate and impoverished, but a new Krinameh with good wide roads and so many new buildings that for a moment she thought of port Harcourt Water-front. They arrived there at closing time for the schools. The streets were filled with children chattering, kicking rubber balls, and laughing. Their presence seemed to fill Krinameh. She remembered Chief Ofubara's eternal cry for education. She remembered too that with her altered circumstances she could answer some at least of his cry. (*Jagua Nana* 189)

Jagua had an illicit relationship with a man from Lagos. That illicit relationship resulted in the birth of a male child. Though she had

led an immoral, reckless life in Lagos, she began to feel the qualms of conscience. Ekwensi sketched her mental graph thus: "Sometimes she thought of a name for it 'Uzo' would be a fitting one, meaning 'Road.' ...Even if she went back to the coast to live, the Lagos or to Port Harcourt, things would be on a new footing. She would never again be so reckless with the ingredients of the fast life and faster oblivion." (Jagua Nana 190).

Jagua's life in Lagos had been a complete failure. Therefore, she spelt out her plans of becoming a diametrically opposite woman from what she had been earlier. She was full of high hopes as she dilated her plans to her mother: Mamma now I got some money. Is going to be different. I Kin buy me our lorry and me own shop by de river, I going to join de society of de women an' make frien' with dem. I sure to succeed. I was to become proper merchant princess. I goin' to buy me own shop, and lorry and employ me own driver. I goin' to face dis business serious. I sure dat God above goin' to bless me. (Jagua Nana 192)

Ekwensi's novel, *People of the City* showed how the lure for money goaded the native Africans to gravitate to Lagos where their lives were marked by corrupt practices and immoral ways. Amusa Sango, a crime reporter for *West African Sensation* was well known to the people of Lagos particularly, to the girls of the city as the leader of a dance band. Ekwensi recorded the lurid sensation of the women of Lagos on their listening to the music of Sango: "Wives drop their knitting or serving and wiggle their hips, shoulders and breasts, sighing with the nostalgia of musty nights years ago when lover's eyes were warm on their faces. (*People of the City* 3)

Achebe's second novel *No Longer At Ease* (1960) intended as a sequel to *Things Fall Apart* is set in the capital of Nigeria in the late 1960's. Obi Okonkwo the grandson of Okonkwo is a victim of the two cultures, Igbo and English. He is an honest, hardworking bureaucrat. He eventually becomes corrupt because he is unable to reconcile to the demands placed upon him by his girlfriend Clara and his tradition bound parents.

Social and cultural pressures force Obi to take a bribe and consequently he is sent to jail. Achebe uses a third person narration in this novel. He also employs the flash-back technique judiciously. One of the stylistic devices of this novel is the use of irony. The use of proverbs to set the tone of the story is one of the narrative strategies of Achebe in this novel. Achebe makes use of a variety of anecdotes to impart richness to his story telling.

In *No Longer at Ease* the narrator describes Obi's life in England vis-à-vis his love towards Clara, a nurse with attractive physical features. During his stay in England Obi was impelled towards Nigeria: "It was in England that Nigeria first became more than just a name to him. That was the first great thing that England did for him." (*No Longer at Ease* 11) Ever since his childhood attachment towards Lagos was clouded by illusions and those illusions about Lagos began to shatter themselves when he looked at the horrendous slums of Lagos (too horrendous to be described in words) after he returned to Lagos from England. Achebe scripted the journey of Obi to Nigeria with all the minute details. Obi was shocked beyond measure when he saw people indulging in bribery in the customs department. His reaction to the rampant bribery in the customs office was certainly acrimonious.

The *Umuofia Progressive Union* accorded him a cordial welcome and even arranged a reception in his honour. At the reception Obi was clad in a shirt instead of a suit, much to the chagrin of the members of the union. The secretary of the *Umuofia Progressive Union* who was entrusted with the onerous task of reading out the welcome address was full of eulogy for Obi's education in England. Since Obi had proceeded to England on a loan scholarship; he underscored the need for Obi's repayment of the loan amount. His speech was interspersed with brilliant epithets. It was rather amusing to listen to the speech of the secretary; his niceties of expression eclipsed the expressions of Obi who had attuned himself to British language and culture. Obi's epithets were tinged with notions of idealism: "Education for service, not for white-collar jobs and comfortable salaries. With our great country on the threshold of

Independence, we need men who are prepared to serve her well and truly.” (No Longer at Ease 29) As time wears on, his idealism begins to wear away also. Much of his decline in the idealistic graph could be attributed to the financial crisis in his life, let alone his unpalatable experiences.

The narrator brings into broad focus the interview of Obi by the members of the Public Service Commission. The chairman of the commission showed his predilection for the twentieth century British fiction and British poetry. When a question is put on the novel of Graham Greene, *The Heart of the Matter*, Obi gives a trenchant rejoinder: “The only sensible novel any European has written on West Africa and one of the best novels I have read... only it was ruined by the happy ending (No Longer at Ease 36)Obi’s mental state is graphically brought out in the way he justifies his opinion: The Police Officer is torn between his love of a woman and his love of God and he commits suicide. It’s much too simple. Tragedy is not like that at all. I remember an old man in my village, a Christian convert, who suffered one calamity after another. He said life was like a bowl of wormwood, which one sips a little at a time without end. He understood the nature of tragedy”(No Longer at Ease 36)

Achebe sounds the theme of corruption in Obi’s interview at the Public Service Commission. One of the august members of the commission asked him a pertinent question: “Why do you want a job in the civil service? So that you can take bribes?” (No Longer at Ease 36). So it was crystal clear to the adult Obi that corruption had become institutionalized in Nigeria. Obi had a brush with bribery when he made his return journey. It appalled him to see policemen applying their pressure tactics on drivers to cough out money. When he tries to meddle in their affairs, the driver spits contempt on him for his doing so. He is not certain whether he should begin his lesson of idealism from the grass root level. His sense of uncertainty has a tinge of cynicism about it: “Where does one begin? With the masses? Educate the masses ... Not a chance there. It would take centuries” (No Longer at Ease 40). It is ironical that the same Obi takes recourse to bribery in the course of the novel.

The principal theme in the novel is the theme of corruption but the secondary theme is the collision of cultures. Achebe assumes the role of a detached commentator and he takes pot shots at Christianity through the protagonist Obi. The commentator is quick to observe that when the elderly people of the village express their complacency for his not marrying any white woman in England,Obi’s heart distends with pride. They recall the heroic exploits of Obi’s grandfather Okonkwo who died fighting a white man single-handedly: “He is the grandson of Ogbuefi Okonkwo who faced the white man single-handed and died in the fight” (No Longer at Ease 48)The village elder Odogwu boast of the traditional greatness of Iguedo: “We are the first in all the nine villages to send our son to the white man’s land. Greatness has belonged to Iguedo from ancient times ... The great tree chooses where to grow and we find it there, so it is with the greatness in man” (No Longer at Ease 49)In his decision to marry Clara, an Osu, he gives a rude jolt to his parents and the elderly people of the village and their adherence to tradition.

Obi’s decision to marry Clara the Osu girl smacks of immorality, if the views of Obi’s father Isaac is anything to go by. The reasons which he advances to reject an Osu girl are in keeping with his traditional beliefs: “Osu is like leprosy in the minds of our people. I beg of you, my son, not to bring the mark of shame and of leprosy into your family. If you do, your children and your children’s children unto the third and fourth generations will curse your memory. It is not for myself I speak, my days are few. You will bring sorrow on your head and on the heads of your children. Who will marry your daughters? Whose daughters will your sons marry? Think of that, my son. We are Christians, but we cannot marry our own daughters.”(No Longer at Ease 121)

The acid test of Obi’s idealism is seen when the brother of a candidate makes an ardent request to extend some favour to his sister. The candidate meets Obi in his flat and offers herself to Obi so that she can win a scholarship and pursue higher studies in England. Obi rejects her outright and he feels overjoyed in doing so. At this point the story of the kite and duckling flashes across Obi’s mind.

The story was mentioned in Achebe's first novel, *Things Fall Apart*. He is doubly sure that by refusing a bribe he shall invite more problems than by accepting it. The financial crisis impinges on his thought process nevertheless he remains firm in his lofty idealism by rejecting the offer of the bribe. Obi confronts one problem after another. Achebe not only portrays Obi's indecisive ways but also his deterioration of values. For instance, Obi takes up the anthology of poems of A.E. Houseman and desires to read it but is amused to find that one of his poem written on Nigeria. On reading the poem, Obi feels that Houseman has not done justice to it. Then Obi's strange behaviour at the shop of the doctor is held up to ridicule by the novelist. He breaks up the queue and Achebe comments on his behaviour thus: "Beast of no nation" (*No Longer at Ease* 138)

Achebe found that the root cause of Obi's struggle was his pride and egocentricity. It was evident in the words of the narrator: "The chief result of the crisis in Obi's life was that it made him examine critically for the first time the mainspring of his actions. And in doing so he uncovered a good deal that he could only regard as sheer humbug. Take this matter of twenty pounds every month to his town union, which in the final analysis was the root cause of all his troubles. Why had he not swallowed his pride and accepted the four month's exemption which he had been allowed, albeit, with a bad grace? Could a person in his position afford that kind of pride? Was it not a common saying among his people that a man should not, out of pride and etiquette, swallow his phlegm?" (*No Longer at Ease* 141)

There is a time in Obi's life when he is in dire financial straits. But at that stage instead of spending money on the journey to attend his mother's funeral, he sends home all the money that he has. In the Umuofia Progressive Union meeting, the members blame him squarely for his not going home to do his obsequies. They are highly critical of his actions and even call him a beast.

Achebe is authentic in pointing out that the 'idealist' in Obi dies with the death of his mother. All the vestiges of idealism in Obi melt into thin air after her death. Obi begins to accept bribe without any qualms of conscience. His moral decline is also seen in the

carnal pleasure which he derives from girls aspiring for scholarship. In the early part of his career, whenever he transgressed the moral code he was haunted by a feeling of guilt. But the feeling of guilt did not impinge on his thought process later. In this connection Obi was reminded of the story of King David in the Bible. King David declined food when his son was sick. But he had his victuals when his son died. Robert M. Wren makes a pertinent remark: "Through the grandson of Okonkwo, the novel becomes a parable of modern Nigeria, a commentary on apparently universal corruption and on the colonial judgement of the new African generation" (*Achebe's World* 38).

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A Saga of a Woman in Girish Karnad's Bali : The Sacrifice

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Girish Karnad, recipient of Jnanpith award, has lent a unique voice to the already existing rich tradition of Indian theatre. Karnad's plays are a beautiful amalgamation of the traditional and the modern sensibilities, thereby, redefining Indian theatre and nourishing it with a new vigour and life-force. A playwright, poet, actor, director, who also translated his plays in English and gained international fame, Karnad's plays have a global appeal. His plays are rooted in history and myth. *Yayati* (1961), *Tuglaq* (1964), *Hayavadana* (1971), *Anjumalige* (1977), *Nagamandala* (1971), *Hittina Hunja* (1980), *The Fire and the Rain* (1994), *The Dreams of Tipu Sultan* (1997), *Broken Images* (2004), *Flowers: A Monologue* (2004), *The Wedding Album* (2009), speak volumes about his fame as a playwright.

Bali: The Sacrifice (2004) is an English translation of *Hittina Hunja* (1980). The play is inspired by thirteenth century Kannada epic, *Yashodhara Charite* by Janna, which refers back to epics during the eleventh and ninth centuries. Girish Karnad in his preface to the play quotes late Professor Bimal Matilal of All Souls, Oxford, 'Great epics apart from being the source of everything else, constitute an important component of what we may term as moral philosophical thinking of the Indian tradition...professional philosophers of India over the last two thousand years have very seldom discussed what we may call moral philosophy today...The tradition itself was self-conscious about moral values, moral conflicts and dilemmas, as well as difficulties of what we call practical reason or practical wisdom. This consciousness found its expression in the epic stories and narrative literature.' (Karnad70).

The play *Bali: The Sacrifice*, focusses on the conflict between the Vedantic and Jain philosophical thinking and the way of life. There is no basic difference between thought and deed as far as

violence is concerned. There is a myth conveyed through the cock made of dough meant to be sacrificed that would, on one hand appease the Gods and on the other would save one from sacrificing a living being. Myth plays a powerful role in the religious and cultural set up of our society. It gives varied possibilities to the writer to mould and shape his thoughts through the use of symbols and suggestive imagery. The question on violence (both in deed and intention) and compassion are the themes that form an intricate design of the plot.

The play consists of four characters. A Hindu King marries a Jain Princess (his Queen in the play). The King follows Jainism, as the precepts of non-violence, compassion and love appeal to him. The King, later finds himself in a dilemma as he stands torn between his earlier Hindu faith with which he was born and brought up and his adopted new faith, that is Jainism. The king's mother, the Queen Mother, is a staunch Hindu, who has full faith in the Vedantic philosophy wherein sacrifices to appease the Gods form an integral part of one's religion. Sacrifices are an expression of an all pervasive violence. The Queen (King's wife) remains a devout Jain throughout. In the play marked by dilemmas and confusions, the King is shown oscillating between the Queen Mother and the Queen, who symbolize two opposite ideologies. Even at the end, the king fails to come out of his dilemma. The fourth character, the Mahout, has a beautiful voice although he is very ugly. The Queen gets attracted by his song and mates with him. This is a transgression in the patriarchal set-up of society. The Queen Mother suggests a sacrifice to be made in order to atone for this sin. The king, who is also shocked by his wife's act, forces his Queen to offer a sacrifice even if in the form of a cock made of dough to which at first, she agrees reluctantly. It is something against her faith. The Queen does not believe in sacrifices. Instead of inserting a sword in the bird made of dough, the Queen kills herself. In the original epic, only thought of adultery is there. In Karnad's play, the adultery is actually committed.

In this paper, I attempt to study the predicament of the Queen in *Bali: The Sacrifice* with respect to the physical woes of a woman.

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A woman, in a marriage, lives under the continual pressure to bear a child to the man that she is married to. I will discuss this under the light of some precepts of Foucault in his *The History of Sexuality* Vol. 1. (1976). Foucault is a poststructuralist whose works can be studied under the canopy of cultural studies. Cultural studies is an innovative technique in research that investigates the way "culture" creates and transforms individual experiences, everyday life, social relations and power. French by birth, Foucault has written *Madness and Civilisation*, *The Birth of a Clinic*, *The Order of Things* and *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. His *History of Sexuality* shows how the modern civilisation controls human subjects through the institutions like prison, schools and hospitals. The present paper looks at the aspect of marriage as an institution in which a woman loses hold on her subjectivity. Foucault says that the body is arranged, regulated and supervised rather than tortured.

As mentioned earlier, the Queen mates with the Mahout. The incident raises a significant question regarding body and transgression. Sudhir Kakkar holds the opinion that the physical aspect is hardly talked about in an Indian marriage. It was sought from "courtesans well versed in the arts, women by definition who did not fit into the socially accepted norms of the respectable family women" (Sarat 33). As suggested here extramarital enjoyment for women is a taboo, even in the modern times. It is expected from women, in a patriarchal system, to have a control over their bodies and lives. Foucault's focus on the analysis of sexuality has played an important role in challenging the preconceived notions of identity of an individual. As stated by Foucault, "The marriage relation was the most intense focus of constraint. It was under constant surveillance. It had to plead its case before a witness. Breaking rules of marriage or seeking strange pleasures brought an equal measure of condemnation." (Hurley 37-8). The Queen does break such rules. Further as Foucault holds that perversion led to a type of power to bear upon the body and the sex. "This power had neither the law nor the effects of the taboo." (Hurley 47). The King is very fond of his Queen. The moment the Queen transgresses, the King falls back on his mother,

the Queen Mother, to guide him through, in his treatment of his wife, the Queen. Foucault here talked about a moderation of sexual practice and control of lust which were seen as defining of a moral self. To say otherwise, an individual does come to recognise the self as a sexed individual but also starts judging oneself morally with respect to one's sexual behaviour. The Queen hesitates to show her face to the Mahout as the latter insists on knowing her identity. She prefers to hide in dark. And Foucault does ask then 'Why is sexual conduct, why are the activities and pleasures that attach to it, an object of moral solicitude?' (Mills87).

The Queen in this play transgresses a moral code. What was something limited between a husband and a wife went on between the Queen and an elephant- keeper. The Queen was a caged bird. She was continually derided by the Queen Mother for her inability to bear a child and for following a different religious faith. The king also presses her for an heir. The Queen longs for a breath of fresh air. She tells the king: "Then I could make love to you- for its own sake- to make love." (95). Patriarchal rules have considered pleasure as the sole domain of males. A woman is questioned upon if she enjoys sex outside marriage. Such a woman is branded as an 'Adulteress'. Women in a man's world are seen to fall within the precincts of an ideal, and the fallen women are not considered fit enough to fall within the framework of a 'woman'. Patriarchy has never recognised a woman as a human being, possessing the attributes of both good and bad.

Foucault is not simply interested in the way subjects come to recognise themselves as sexed individuals, but also in the way that this analysis of one's sexual behaviour leads one to judge oneself morally. The Queen knows that she committed adultery in the eyes of others. But she declares her likeness for the Mahout and tells him that she will never forget him. She describes her union with the Mahout to the king: 'And what happened was beautiful'. (119). The king forces her to perform a sacrifice in order to atone for her sin. The Queen prefers to kill herself. The rejection of performing a sacrifice lays in her Jain faith and its stern belief in non-violence as a way of life. The Queen doesn't hold herself responsible for any

moral transgression. At the same time, she is well aware of its social implications and the effect of her act as a disturbing shock to the king. She tells the king, "You want me to play your wife so that I can damn myself as an adultress?" (113). Towards the end of the play, the Queen is decisive to accept the consequences of her transgression and not to live in a relationship that stifles her breath.

According to Foucault, the relations between men and women are still often structured around notions of unequal power. If one is sexually liberated and freed from all prudish constraints, it was argued, one may discover a desire, the truth of their being, be it natural or fallen (Mills 5). In the play, the relation between the king and the Queen is of unequal power. The Queen is a royalty but a woman, a wife, a daughter-in-law; hence, powerless. The king feels humiliated because his wife is unable to bear a child and even if she does at last, she undergoes a miscarriage. The Queen says, "Sometimes I've felt -I had to abort to prove to you I was pregnant. To show you the proof" (114). The Queen refuses to bear a child after her miscarriage. The Queen is able to liberate herself sexually and she is her true self in as much as she enjoys the company of the Mahout. It is also her realisation of the 'self' that she abhors and refuses to perform a sacrifice even if in the form of a bird made of dough. One's religious faith is the garb of one's soul. The Queen is able to realise her true self. The body is experienced as alien to one's thinking self or the soul; it is experienced as confinement and limitation; and the body then becomes enemy which eludes the control of her psyche. In the play, the Queen's body runs out of her psychological self. Her physical state is mesmerized by the song of the Mahout. It is this physical state of hers that is at its happiest.

Foucault talks about the notion of liberation through sexuality as mere illusion. He declares that 'desire' and 'power relations' are both present at the same time. The Queen spends time with the Mahout but does not want her identity to be revealed to him. She hides herself in the dark, lest her face be visible. The Mahout forces her to declare her identity. He says, "Don't. Don't make me angry. You don't know my temper. I have beaten women black and blue.

You won't like it..." (76). There is no sign of liberation for the Queen here. It is while protecting her dignified position of royalty that she has to cover her face. The Mahout is also exercising his power over the woman, whose real identity he is least aware of. The Mahout says, "Listen, I could easily drag you to the window and see your face..." (76). The Mahout is not only rude to her but also holds her shoulder forcefully, so that his fingers get imprinted over the soft skin of the Queen's shoulders. The identity of the Queen is revealed to him, through the intervention of the king, the Mahout starts addressing her as royalty. Power relations here overpower 'desire'. It is not so much a question of, power-relations or even sexuality. The play is a saga of a Queen trying to overcome her loneliness which she is able to identify with that of the Mahout. It does land her into a quagmire. She does realise the consequences of her going astray. Her words, "...Is there any other way out of here?" (83) signify her awareness of the futility of desire and immanence of 'power relations' that one is subjected to.

Foucault's ideas about sexuality have led to a radical questioning of the relation between sexual choice and sexual preference and identity. His work has also been influential in rethinking identity itself. There is a concern with the performative rather than essentialist views of identity. In the play, the Mahout is certainly not the Queen's choice. She loves the king, her husband. But too much of overpowering ruins their conjugal peace. The king fails to realise that an heir should be the result of a conjugal togetherness and not the vice-versa. The Queen also says, "...when you were being loving and understanding, the ideal husband- you were only pretending. That's what you believed?" (114). Is identity, then, at the cost of one's dignity? The Queen, who in turn, is a representation of a whole race of 'women', cannot be said to acquire her identity only after transgressing. In order to establish her identity, the Queen had to give priority to a sexual preference rather than choice. The sexual choice open for her was only her husband, the king. Because body and sexuality are cultural constructs rather than a natural phenomena. So, definitely there is no idea of a preference. The biological difference will remain

in our social construct. Gender inequality cannot be done away with. And a woman will have to have a control over her body and sexual preference. Identity is not something fixed, it keeps on shifting. The Queen tells the king, "No, me. For one night, I was nameless." (88). The Queen prefers not to be recognised as royalty or even by her name. All she desires is just a whiff of fresh air or so to say to be considered a human being. A woman should be recognised essentially as an individual and not just a 'body'. The act of transgressing by the Queen poses a question for patriarchy. There is a need for a change in our perception about women. The play is very intriguing. It is a thought-provoking story that raises several questions on identity, body and sexuality and the role of an individual in the moral reconstruction of a social order that one is a part of.

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Protagonist in the Novels of Charlotte Bronte

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The Victorian period or as it is most appropriately called "The age of transition" is considered to have commenced in 1830, when Charlotte Bronte was beginning her career. The British Empire was growing stronger and prosperous under the reign of Queen Victoria (1819-1901). It was the period of unparalleled material prosperity and political stability which also witnessed remarkable growth in cultural as well as literary activities. In her fiction, Charlotte Bronte is very much concerned with the moral and spiritual values of a time when industry and science uprooted the old England. The condition of women was very depressing in the early nineteenth century. They were supposed to strictly follow certain moral and social norms. Women were meant to be seen not heard. Their activity was confined to the four walls of the house.

Thus, women were supposed to depend solely on father, brother and husband for support. But during late nineteenth century their condition started changing and they started a struggle for their rights. The new frankness about women was just what was needed to give the English novel the injection of vitality and reality. The 'Woman question' had formed an essential part of Victorian thought during most of the reign. But the novelist most often cited as an early pleader for the real nature of women is Charlotte Bronte (1816-1855). Being a woman, Charlotte Bronte sympathized with the repressed conditions of women making an effort to liberate them. Charlotte Bronte once wrote, "I speculate much on the existence of unmarried and never to be married woman, now a days and I have already got to the point of considering that there is no more respectable character on this earth than an unmarried woman who makes her own way through life quietly, perservingly, without support of husband or brother...."¹ So, Charlotte concentrates upon women, who besides being powerless victims of political and economic forces are subjugated by a male oriented society and reduced to the position of ineffectual

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creatures. The novels explore this problem by means of the heroines. In her works, one can trace the movement of her heroines from a revolt against social norms to the achievement of the ideal freedom. Charlotte seeks to discover and change the more subtle and deep rooted causes of women's oppression. She was looked upon suspiciously by her contemporaries because of her feminist leanings. Her heroines vibrate with passion that the society tries to constrict. One can perceive in Charlotte's fiction responses to the incidents in her life. Charlotte Bronte with all her passions and intensity never forgets herself, her pains and sufferings, her dreams and aspirations. It is extremely true that her intention was only to seek a personal emotional release. Lord David Cecil rightly comments. "The world she creates is the world of her own inner life, she is her own subject." The immense solitude of their lives indoors the Haworth Parsonage, situated at a sequestered place in Yorkshire imposed upon them a kind of gravity which exercised a powerful influence in the shaping of their minds. But Charlotte of them all had the strongest feeling that she was unloved and ignored. For this reason, the desire to be loved and recognized in the strongest of all the urges in her heroines. Mrs. Gaskell quotes in her book, 'The life of Charlotte Bronte' (1857) from one of her letters to show how unbearable it was for her to live unloved or ignored. Charlotte progresses in her novels to a final realization of the unavoidable nature of suffering and its nature and dignified acceptance. The novels of Charlotte Bronte center around the heroines who are very passionate and yearn for fulfilment. Her major concern is the private life of her heroines. They exist in an alien and harsh world and because of their intense loneliness yearn for fulfilment in love, but at the same time wish to avoid spiritual destruction. Thus, there is a conflict between the flesh and spirit and her women characters are faced with certain moral and ethical choices. The note of intimacy, passion and revolt can be clearly seen in her novels.

As Robert B. Heilman points out in Charlotte Bronte's *New Gothic*, "Charlotte's women vibrate with passions that the fictional conventions only partly constrict or gloss over in the center and

almost violent devotedness that has in it at once, a fire of responsiveness and along with this self righteousness, a sense of power, sometimes self pity and envious competitiveness. To an extent, the heroines are "unheroined", unsweetened. Into them there has come a new feeling of the feeling and personality."²

Their relationship after marriage is a blend of independence, submissiveness and control. No wonder her novels end with heroines wanting to remain economically independent. Jane is economically independent when she married Rochester as she has inherited a legacy from her uncle. Shirley in *Shirley* (1849) is a land owner who marries her tutor. Francis Henri in *The Professor* (1957) initially a lace maker improves her qualifications and becomes a teacher. In *Villette* (1853) Lucy Snowe is running her own school. Thus, her heroines as protagonists assert their individuality in the course of the novel. They try to establish their equality with men in a male dominated world. Her heroines revolt against the traditional social norms and try to get their ideal freedom. Shirley in *Shirley* (1849) asserts her individuality in the male dominated world. She revolts against her uncle. Mr. Helstone who has a very poor opinion of woman and has no faith in their morality and integrity. Shirley marries Louis moor, her tutor, and thus breaks the conventional divisions of rich and poor. In this way, she achieves her ideal freedom and romantic fulfillment towards the end of the novel. The women protagonists had to suffer a lot in the male dominated world but in the end they achieve their ideal freedom. *Jane Eyre* (1847) is the picture of a suffering, lonely individual in the form of little child, Jane. She rebels against the tyrannical authority of Mrs. Reed, her aunt, and experiences the romantic glow of released passion: "My soul began to expand, to exult, with the strangest sense of freedom, of triumph, I ever felt." (chap. IV) She is tortured mentally and physically and eventually leaves the Reed household. She is sent to a charity school for orphan children at Lowood. There, she has the company of Helen Burns from whom she learns the creed of acceptance of suffering. She wants to spread her wings and becomes a governess at Thornfield. The master of the household, Rochester, falls violently in love with

her. She is attracted to him even though he is not good looking as she says: "I am sure most people would have thought him an ugly man, yet there was so much unconscious pride in his port: so much ease in his demeanour; such a look of complete indifference to his own external appearance, so haughty an reliance on the power of other qualities, intrinsic or adventitious, to atone for the lack of more personal attractiveness, that, in looking at him, one inevitably shared the indifference and even in a blind, imperfect sense, put faith in the confidence. (Jane Eyre, p.152) He persuades Jane to marry him but she can't compromise her economic independence. On the day of their marriage, Jane learns that Rochester is already married and has a mad wife, Bertha Mason. Her Christian faith forbids her to commit adultery. At the end of the novel, they are united but only after Bertha is dead and Rochester purged of passion. Terry Eagleton comments on their relationships: 'her ultimate relation to him is a complex blend of independence, submissiveness and control.'³

Shirley, the second published novel of Charlotte Bronte, has two women characters. Shirley, the heroine of Shirley (1849), wants to establish her equality with men in man's world on the other hand, Caroline is passive and deeply loves Robert Moore, her cousin. But Robert is guided by reason, he therefore wants to marry Shirley, the rich heiress. Through Shirley and Caroline, Charlotte examines the position and difficulties of common women. Elizabeth Hardwick feels that, "Charlotte Bronte's Shirley addresses itself to the regrets and consolations of lonely women, to the stoicism and patience they try to command"⁴.

Charlotte Bronte died in 1855 as she fell ill with tuberculosis and also suffered because of complication of pregnancy. After Charlotte Bronte's death, his father asked Mrs. Gaskell to commemorate his daughter. Mrs. Gaskell did so by writing the biography, Life of Charlotte Bronte which appeared in 1857. With the books appearance, Charlotte Bronte won the fame and recognition of her literary talent, which she had yearned all her life. She inaugurated the ordinary hero and heroine who had to earn their own livelihood. She dramatizes the conflict of reason and feeling in her novels. She

has the modern interest in the protagonist as outsider and is deeply involved with the question of role of women. This appealed not only to the Victorian reader but gives her a universality and accounts for her relevance even today. She displays with moving conviction and authority, the isolation, loneliness and the neuroses associated with the condition of women. W.A. Craik rightly says "Charlotte's theme is man's relations with other men and with his moral duty to them, to himself, and to the eternal truths as he sees them."⁵

A close examination of Charlotte Bronte's novels bears out that the world of her novels is aglow with seethe and surge of passionate feelings and excitements which the conventional society often tends to thwart. The Bronte heroines usually crave for freedom and fulfilment. In her novels, the primitive and savage society had to be replaced by a civilized society and that is what her heroine attempts. Her exploration of new feelings, psychological states of mind such as different neurosis make her novels highly fascinating and engaging. Charlotte Bronte had been discussed along with many other women writers for her interest in the women question. One can notice the progression of the writer from a depiction of delete revolts and compliance to ultimate fulfilment of the protagonists.

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Negotiation and Difference in Contemporary Cultural Artifacts: Examination of the Albums Antaragni and Jag Changa by Raghu Dixit as Third Space

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Abstract

The Postcolonial theoretician Homi K. Bhabha through his theory of Hybridization describes that the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments of a cultural product or artifact from which the third emerges, rather hybridity is the 'third space' which enables new positions to emerge. The paper explores music elements in the album Antaragni and Jag Changa by Raghu Dixit in order to identify if the albums augment negotiation and difference. The aim of the paper is therefore to locate third space in the cultural artifacts Antaragni and Jag Changa, augmented by negotiation and difference. The checklist of parameters of musical expression from the 'Hermeneutic-semiotic' method by musicologist Phillip Tagg is employed as a tool for exploring the songs of the albums. In the first part of the exploration, the author provides a syntactical arrangement of the music elements of three songs from both the albums. This will provide an understanding of the negotiation between music elements in the albums and their structure of authority. The second part will identify if the music elements in the albums augment something different from its parent genres, and thereby allow new positions to emerge. The concept of Hybridity and Third Space by Homi K. Bhabha is employed in the paper for the purpose of exploration and understanding.

Key Words: Hybridity, Third Space, Antaragni, Jag Changa, Negotiation, Difference.

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Although cultural mixing can be traced even beyond the colonial period, it is the post colonial enquiry into the relationship between the orient and the occident that flared up the debates and discussions in the academic setup. The concept of cultural mixing is evidently felt even today in a globalized world as the physical and metaphorical borders have turned into a melting pot of multiple cultures. As Norwegian social anthropologist Thomas Eriksen explains, "the cultural mixing resulting from globalisation takes many forms" (Eriksen 2007: 122), music as a mixed cultural form and practice has also continually engaged in the process of hybridization. Therefore, in an in-between world, it becomes crucial to explore the negotiation and exchange of cultural elements in the domain of music.

According to Post Colonial theoretician Homi K. Bhabha, "the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments of a cultural product or artifact from which the third emerges, rather hybridity is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge" (Bhabha 2006: 95). The concept of third space here focuses on the uniqueness of each person, artifact or context as a hybrid augmented by negotiation and difference. The paper seeks to explore the cultural products or artifacts Antaragni and Jag Changa by Raghu Dixit, in order to identify if the negotiation between the music elements in the albums augment new positions to emerge. Therefore the aim of the paper focuses on locating the albums as third space augmented by negotiation and difference.

The paper will refer to the checklist of parameters of musical expression from the "Hermeneutic-semiotic method" (Tagg 1979: 68-70) by musicologist Phillip Tagg, as a tool for exploring the arrangement of music elements in the songs of the albums. The checklist as of volume 11 (Tagg 2015) includes:

1. Aspects of time: Duration of the songs, the tempo, rhythmic texture and motif.
2. Melodic aspects: Contour of the melody line, timbre, tonality and rhythmic motif.

3. Orchestration aspects: type and number of voices, instruments and timbre.
4. Aspects of tonality and texture: compositional texture, relationship between voices, parts and instruments.
5. Dynamic aspects: levels of sound strength and audibility of parts. (Tagg 7-10).

Although this method is a tool for analyzing the important parameters of musical expression of the songs in the albums, it will not be applied slavishly or in a servile manner. The reason being the fact that some parameters may be absent, while others may recur constantly in almost all the songs of the albums. In order to locate the albums as third space, the paper will explore the negotiation of music elements in three songs from both the albums, as well as identify the differences, if any, which allows something new and different to emerge. The exploration of the negotiation aspect in the songs will be done by providing a syntactical arrangement of the songs, which will employ the checklist of parameters of musical expression of the Hermeneutic-Semiotic method mentioned above. This is followed by exploring the arrangement of music elements, in order to identify the possibility of something different in the albums, which otherwise cannot be found in its parent genres or original moments.

The syntactical arrangement of the three songs from the album *Antaragni* is as follows:

1. Ambar

0:00 to 0:08- The song starts off with an acoustic guitar riff.

0:09 to 1:34- The introduction of the vocal along with the ukulele and bass guitar sets the contour of the melody line.

1:35 to 2:04- The use of Sarod string instrument solo interspersed in between the vocals as a Bridge, gives greater depth to the song.

2:05 to 7:29- The soft texture of the song is maintained throughout the song with the gentle strumming of ukulele,

acoustic guitar and the heavy vocal intonation of Raghu Dixit, tied together by the instrumental solo of Sarod.

7:30 to 7:56- The cue for the end of the song is given by the fade out technique used. The instruments fade out, leaving the vocal of Raghu to end the song.

Negotiation: Drawing from the syntactical arrangement of the song *Ambar*, it can be understood that the use of folk and rock instruments have been done in such a way that the structure of authority is shared between both the forms. This can clearly be identified from the equal distribution of the number of folk and rock instruments which formed the contour of the melody line in the song. Neither folk music elements nor rock music elements dominate the melody line. Therefore the hybrid between folk and rock music elements in the song provides a balanced context of folk- rock music.

Difference: The instrumentation in the song involves folk instruments such as Sarod and Ukelele, which are similar to what is seen in the parent genres of folk music, as well as rock instruments such as Acoustic guitar and Bass guitar, are similar to what is seen in the rock music genre. The song does not employ anything different which could possibly allow new positions to emerge. Therefore it is understood that the song does not transcend the binary logic of the parent genres.

2. Khidki

0:00 to 0:04- An acoustic guitar riff starts off the song.

0:05 to 0:14- The introduction of drums as the percussive element and the bass guitar sets the rhythm for the entire song.

0:15 to 1:47- The vocal of Raghu Dixit project join this combination of the string and percussive elements and complements the intonation of the instruments.

1:48 to 2:04- The song maintains the vibrant mood with the introduction of the electric guitar.

2:05 to 2:38- The electric guitar solo provides the song greater depth paving the way for an elision.

2:39 to 4:19- The instruments engage in an elision with the vocal of Raghu Dixit to increase the tempo of the song and end at a high pitch.

Negotiation: The use of rock instruments alone in the song Khidki clearly explains the intention of the composer to set a rock context for the song. Drawing from the arrangement of instruments in the melody line of the above song, it is clear that no form of negotiation has taken place due to the absence of a folk or a rock counterpart. Therefore the structure of authority in the song is dominated by the rock music sounds.

Difference: The rock instruments in the above song do not create something new which is potentially different from the parent rock music genre. The string and percussive instruments exist as rock instruments creating rock sounds before, during and after the song. It does not experiment with the sound of the instrument nor does the contour of the melody employ any techniques that could possibly provide something different using the rock instruments.

3. I'm In Mumbai Waiting for a Miracle.

0:00 to 0:06- The song begins with an acoustic guitar riff.

0:07 to 0:14- The introduction of the drums sets the rhythm for the song.

0:15 to 0:21- The vocal of Raghu Dixit complements the rock instruments used.

0:22 to 1:33- The use of violin interspersed throughout the song give it a folk festive mood.

1:34 to 1:56- The introduction of violin solo followed by an electric guitar solo gives the song greater depth.

1:57 to 5:02- The song maintains the melody line and rhythm

for the rest of the song tied together by the vocal of Raghu Dixit. The song ends with sudden drop in tempo.

Negotiation: The interspersing of folk instrumental sound of the violin across the duration of the song sets it at a high pitch. The melody line is dominated by the use of rock instruments such as the acoustic guitar, the percussive drums and the electric guitar. Although the structure of authority when it comes to the contour of the melody line is dominated by the rock instrumental sounds, the expansive use of the violin creates a festive folk mood. This results in a balanced folk-rock context for the song. It can be identified from the arrangement of the violin solo followed by the electric guitar solo in the song, as both complement each other.

Difference: The instrumentation as well as arrangement of sounds does not qualify as something new or different. The folk sound of the violin resembles the folk genre and the rock instruments resemble the rock genre. There is no form of interpretation of instruments or experimentation taking place in the melody line of the song. Although the song follows a verse-chorus form, it does not use any techniques which allow the possibility of something different from its parent genres.

The syntactical arrangement of the three songs from the album Jag Changa is as follows:

1. Parasiva

0:00 to 0:13- Folk Drum Dhol with reverb begins the song.

0:14 to 0:25- Drums are complemented by cymbals setting up a folk soundscape.

0:26 to 0:45- The soulful vocal of Raghu Dixit begins by matching the pitch set by the drums.

0:46 to 1:46- The introduction of distorted guitar which interprets the beats of the folk drums makes the texture of the song heavy and upbeat.

1:47 to 2:14- Shift from distorted to clean guitar gives the song a softer timbre.

2:15 to 2:46- The interspersing of the distorted and clean guitar sounds make the song more dynamic.

2:47 to 3:13- The introduction of the trumpet solo gives the song a distinctive folk touch.

3:14 to 3:59- The contour of the melody line for the rest of the song follows the call of the percussive instrument set at the start of the song, which is interpreted by the rock and folk instruments throughout the duration of the song.

4:00 to 4:38- The song ends with an elision wherein all the instruments along with the vocal of Raghu Dixit combines and ends the song at a high.

Negotiation: The folk percussive instrument sets the rhythm for the rock instruments to follow. The contour of the melody line is evenly arranged by the use of folk instruments such as dhol, cymbals and trumpet, which are complemented by the interspersing of distorted as well as clean guitar sounds across the duration of the song. Therefore the song can be identified as setting a balanced folk-rock context from the use of the technique of elision employed in the song. This makes the song dynamic as the structure of authority of the song is shared by folk and rock instrumentals.

Difference: The use of the call and response technique in this song brings about something different, which is a step beyond what is usually seen in the parent genres. The folk percussive instrument dhol in this song sets the context for its rock counterparts to follow in the beginning of the song. The distorted guitar interprets the beat of the dhol using a peculiar strumming technique. The miniature cymbals are struck together in such a way that it mimics the beat of the dhol. Therefore the intonation of the distorted guitar as well as the miniature cymbals, in terms of their pitch, is accurate in their interpretation and

imitation of the rhythm set by the dhol. While the natural instrumental design of the distorted guitar is to remain as a rock instrument in the rock genre and that of the cymbals is to remain as a folk instrument in the folk genre before and after the song, they respond to the call of the dhol sound through interpretation and imitation, to create a different acoustic design from what is normally heard, during the song. The distorted guitar goes back to being a rock instrument and the cymbals continue to be a folk instrument after the song.

2. Jag Changa

0:00 to 0:13- The song begins with a vibrant strumming of the acoustic guitar.

0:14 to 0:27- The introduction of the banjo sets in a joyful frantic pulse to the song.

The strumming of the guitar is also interpreted and imitated through the vocal hook of Raghu dixit.

0:28 to 0:41- Multiple voices in the background act as chorus to the vocal hook accompanied by the rhythm set by Khartal and ghungroo or ankle bells.

0:42 to 1:22- The combination of acoustic guitar, khartal, banjo and the vocal of Raghu gives a carnival touch to the song.

1:23 to 1:49-The introduction of a flute solo gives the song a folk touch.

1:50 to 2:31-The song maintains the combinations giving the song a heavy texture.

2:32 to 2:57- The introduction of violin combined by the flute maintains the happy folk touch in the song.

2:58 to 4:20- The vocal range of Raghu is exploited in the song complemented by the voices in the chorus, reflecting the theme of a wakeup call.

4:20 to 4:50-The song ends with an elision in which all the instruments and the vocals combine together. The cue for the end is given by the vocal hook of Raghu dixit.

Negotiation: The structure of authority in this particular song is given to folk instrumental sounds. This can be identified from the variety of folk instruments used in the song. From the regional and national folk instruments like Khartal and flute to the international folk instruments like the Banjo, the melody line clearly sets a folk context for the song. The vibrant strumming of the acoustic guitar also complements the festive folk mood created by the folk instruments in the song.

Difference: The folk dance instrument ghungroo is interpreted to exist as a music instrument for the duration of this song. This is a step beyond what is usually seen in the folk music genre. The folk sound of the anklet serves to accentuate the rhythm of the song and thereby augments something new and different in the song. Ghungroo continues to exist as a dance anklet before and after the song, but during the song it is interpreted to remain as a folk music instrument.

3. Amma

0:00 to 0:09- The song starts off with a gentle guitar riff.

0:10 to 0:27- The introduction of the violin gives the melody a swinging intonation.

0:28 to 0:55- The vocal of Raghu Dixit complements the melody set by the violin.

0:56 to 2:31- The introduction of the folk drums along with the ankle bells sets the rhythm for

the song which is a tamil folk “Koothu” groove.

2:32 to 3:12- The violin solo over the koothu groove gives greater depth to the texture of the song.

3:13 to 4:10- Raghu works with the tempo and pitch of the

song using the range of his vocals.

4:11 to 5:11-The song maintains the folk rhythm of the koothu groove throughout the song.

5:12 to 5:28-The cue for the end of the song is given by the vocals which die down along with the music.

Negotiation: The dominance of the number of folk instruments used to set the contour of the melody line provides a folk context for the song. The use of folk percussive instruments to create a folk koothu groove reflects the intention of the composer to give the structure of authority to folk instrumental sounds in the song. This pattern is complemented by the violin solo which stands out in backing the endearing folk tone and rhythm of the song. The acoustic guitar riff is maintained throughout the song to complement the folk sound augmented by the koothu groove.

Difference: The Koothu groove, which is a tamil folk dance groove, is interpreted using folk percussive instruments such as drums and cymbals to set the rhythm for the song. Rather than being upbeat, the arrangement of sounds in the koothu groove offered greater depth to the texture of the song. This is indeed a step beyond what is normally heard in folk music and rock music genres. The dance anklet ghungroo is also interpreted to exist as a music instrument in the duration of the song to complement the folk rhythm set by the Koothu groove. The koothu groove goes back to being a folk dance groove and the ghungroo remains as a folk dance instrument after the song. It is only in the duration of the song that the interpretation takes place. These folk elements continue to exist as a part of the folk dance form before and after the duration of the song. Therefore, the rhythm of the song augmented by the koothu groove and the ghungroo is something new and different from what is normally heard.

Conclusion

Drawing from the exploration above, the negotiations between the music elements in the album *Antaragni* suggests the formation of a balanced folk-rock context. While the structure of authority is shared by both the folk and rock instrumental sounds in the songs *Ambar* and *I'm in Mumbai Waiting for a Miracle*, the song *Khidki* on the other hand creates a rock context for itself. The album as a whole therefore can be identified as allowing negotiations between folk and rock music elements. When it comes to the aspect of difference, the music elements in the songs do not augment any new position to emerge. Therefore the album does not take a step beyond what is normally heard and identified in the parent genres. From the above exploration of the three songs of the album, it can be drawn that, although *Antaragni* augments the negotiation between folk and rock music elements, it does not enable new or different positions to emerge. Therefore it cannot be identified as third space.

From the above exploration of the songs in the album *Jag Changa*, it can be deduced that the structure of authority of songs *Jag Changa* and *Amma* is dominated by folk instrumental sounds, whereas, in the song *Parasiva*, it is shared between folk and rock music instruments. Therefore it can be inferred that the album *Jag Changa* augments the negotiation between folk and rock music elements. Furthermore, the enabling of new and different positions is identified in the songs of the album *Jag Changa*. From the interpretation of the acoustic guitar in order to mimic the beat of a folk percussive instrument in the song *Parasiva*, and the interpretation of the folk dance instrument *ghungroo* into a folk music instrument in the song *Jag Changa*, to the interpretation of a folk dance *koothu* groove into a music groove to set the rhythm for the song *Amma*, the album has enabled new positions to emerge. These positions are a step beyond what is associated with the parent genres. Therefore the album *Jag Changa* exists as a third space augmented by negotiation and difference. The paper attempts to strengthen the understanding that as cultural mixing can take many forms, even cultural artifacts like music albums can exist within the globalized world as a third space

augmenting negotiation and difference. This opens up the scope for exploring and locating third space in other domains such as novels, album art, painting, dance, social media Applications etc. The paper has explored the musical elements in both the albums, this opens up the scope for analyzing the lyrics as well as the performance aspect of the songs in the album.

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The Tragic in Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* and the Circle of Love, Memory and Death

*Ishita Sareen**

This paper aims to explore the relationship between love, memory and death in the tragic ending of the novel *Never Let Me Go* by Kazuo Ishiguro. The individual agency of the characters and the possibility of a unique subjectivity are issues that are addressed through the hegemony of the dystopic world that the three protagonists of the novel inhabit in 1990s England. For this purpose, I have used the theories of Foucault and Rousseau to explain the concept of a regime of truth while making use of other criticism to address issues such as ethical debates on bio-scientific technology, the fluid definition of morality and the celebratory potential of life and love that make up major concerns of the novel.

I

Michel Foucault in his 1976 lecture titled "Society Must Be Defended" explicitly links the notion of truth to the idea of a regime. He defines truth as a system of ordered procedures, connected by circular relations to the bodies of power and knowledge that exercise and direct its production, distribution, and regulation. The idea of truth becomes the "tactical element in the functioning of a certain number of power relations" leading to the creation of a "government by truth" (Lorenzini). Foucault includes subjectivity in the debate by alleging that the government "demands not only acts of obedience and submission, but truth acts" from its subjects (Foucault et al., 80-81). Thus, the regime of truth becomes a body of power that determines the obligations placed on its subjects with respect to the procedures of how truth is manifested. As Foucault writes, "It is true, and I submit to it" (84). Truth has an all-pervasive aura to it, a ring of rightness that should prevail over everything else.

The rules that define each game of truth are determined by various historical, social and economic factors pertaining to a particular

regime, thus making truth a political production. A specific regime of truth is organized such that "constraint is assured by truth itself" (93). Science as a discourse is one of the possible regimes which binds an individual to the manifestation of truth. The acceptance of truth in this manner takes the form of "subjection or subjectivation" (Lorenzini) as self-constitution is a demand that is commonly made of subjects in such a regime. Foucault conceptualizes that we are not obligated to accept the scientific version of truth as it is handed down to us. More importantly, one need not limit one's subjectivity to the version of societal truth that comprises the hegemony of the moment. The idea that truth takes away choice is a "dangerous ethico-political trap" (Lorenzini) that Foucault unmasks.

The regime of truth in Ishiguro's *Never let Me Go* leads to the creation of a neoliberal dystopia. A world without illness is an excellent utopia but the cruelty towards clones that helps achieve this world creates in effect a dystopic reality.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his *The Social Contract* (1762) describes a society where humans become community property at birth by stating that each member of the community "gives himself to it at the moment it is brought into being just as he is- he himself, with all his resources, including all his goods" (Rousseau 21). The principle of community is defined by Rousseau as "commitments which bind us to the social body [and which] are obligatory only because they are mutual; and their nature is such that in fulfilling them a man cannot work for others without at the same time working for himself" (22). Foucault echoes Rousseau when he lists his debates on "truth acts" that the regime of truth binds its subjects with. Here, clones are raised so that their organs can be 'harvested' through 'donations' till they 'complete'. Moreover, the entire process is internalised to such an extent that the clones consider it their mission to fulfil this duty, for in doing so they will attain their ultimate purpose. Kathy's society is like Bentham's panopticonic prison, a place of experiments where as Foucault puts it, "homogenous effects of power" (Foucault et al., 87) are produced through social obligations.

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The clones are in effect no more than utilities. As James Wood puts it, “they possess individuality, and seem to enjoy it..., but that individuality is a mirage, a parody of liberty” (Wood 39); their existence is of importance up until that point where they are needed by ‘normal’ people to extend their lifespan. They are taught to lead extremely healthy lives so as to ensure healthy donations; their identities are labelled as ‘special’ and ‘gifted’ with no room for a penetrative glance into the dynamisms of the politics underlying their existence.

Thomas More states in *Utopia* that art is central to shaping human creativity because it gives voice to opinions, emotions, and, ultimately, humanity (Hulzebos 20). Ishiguro places great importance on creative impression with respect to development of an inimitable personality in controlled environments that do not allow for socially malleable identities. Being creative is not a measure of dissent but a means of conditioning used by guardians to distract the clones from asking too many questions about their lives.

Hailsham allows them to be bare-boned haiku versions of normal children everywhere for as long as possible. For clones who do not have a definite past to root in, who have letters for surnames and who depend on each other to create the possessions that they will possess, art functions as a medium for the hope of a normal life. As Tommy says, “The thing about Hailsham was that you had this special chance. And if you didn’t get stuff into Madame’s gallery, then you were as good as throwing the chance away...” (Ishiguro 174). They need to believe that the merit of what they are doing will be rewarded (Hulzebos 27) thus making the gallery the ultimate means of recognition.

For Kathy, creativity is very important as is seen in her attachment to her Judy Bridgewater music tape, “I didn’t use to properly listen to the words; I just waited for that bit that went: ‘Baby, baby, never let me go...’ And what I’d imagine was a woman who’d been told she couldn’t have babies, who’d really, really wanted them all her life” (Ishiguro 70). This innocent confession links the clones to a kind of sacrificial purity and lets them inhabit the plane of

common human emotions. Miss Lucy, in a heated argument with Tommy who is very bad at art, tells him that, “Art is important. And not just because it’s evidence. But for your own sake. You’ll get a lot from it, just for yourself” (106). Creativity thus serves to shelter them from the reality of the world. Creativity has a double meaning; it is a tool for the clones to express their feelings through the celebratory potential of life and love and also a tool to hide the truth.

Miss Lucy had already revealed the truth about their existence when she told them, “Your lives are set out for you. You’ll become adults, then before you’re old, before you’re even middle-aged, you’ll start to donate your vital organs. That’s what each of you was created to do” (80). The reaction to this clear statement was obtuse; some students “thought she’d lost her marbles for a moment” (81), others that she was repeating what she’d been asked to say and there were some who thought that “Miss Lucy had just been telling us off for being too rowdy on the veranda” (81). The entire discourse proceeds from ‘donations’ to ‘completion’, euphemisms that absolve the procedure of the horror it projects. Kathy H., the narrator is seemingly more concerned with her personal success as a Carer for her fellow clones than with her own imminent death. In one of her last conversations with Tommy, he asks her if she is not tired of being a carer for eleven years. She replies by saying that “a good carer makes a big difference to what a donor’s life’s actually like” (276) signifying the degree of self-induced denial and their willingness to participate in the charade of their lives where cloning is a necessary evil.

As a part of the lore that has been handed down for generations, Kathy, Tommy and many others believe that the artwork in Madame’s gallery indicates strong feelings like love, and that the expressed feelings could prolong their stay within the institutions thus postponing their fate (Hulzebos 27). At the end, their proof of love is denied by Miss Emily and Madame, resulting in two different reactions. Firstly, Kathy misinterprets Madame’s answer, believing that “we hadn’t yet got to the bottom of things. There was even the possibility she wasn’t telling the truth” (Ishiguro 253). Tommy reacts by going into

one of his fits that marked his teenage; the impossibility of changing his life- even though this was a futile goal- re-emerges after discovering that there is no possibility to postpone the donations (Hulzebos 35).

As Miss Emily says, asking a world that has found the cure for cancer to go back to the “dark days” (Ishiguro 257) out of concern for the donors is not an option. The only option then is to deny the existence of the clones because they can only be accepted if the people believe “that these children are not fully human” (261). With such limited social acceptance, the possibility of achieving a unique subjectivity becomes impossible. Even then the clones in the novel live the illusion of individuality and freedom to the fullest extent and refuse to acknowledge the reality that has been following them since Hailsham. They are no different from the normal people outside who deny the origins of where the organs come from.

Even as they live in a reality where fatality has always been a tangible affair, they accept this fate without concrete dissent and are even able to visualize themselves as fully individual spirits (Hulzebos 37). Acceptance of death is a part of their individualism and even as this does not keep them from seeking a deferral, individuality is a risk that they take in a dystopian narrative.

II

As Madame reminisces, “I saw a new world coming rapidly. More scientific, efficient, yes. More cures for the old sicknesses... But a harsh, cruel world. And I saw a little girl, her eyes tightly closed, holding to her breast the old kind world, one that she knew in her heart could not remain, and she was holding it and pleading, never to let her go” (Ishiguro 266-267). Ishiguro creates a utopia where bio-scientific debates on cloning are non-existent as their benefits to society are accepted and encouraged. A state machine where individuals are commodified to ensure the longevity of the species as a whole places a delimiting value on individuality of its subjects for it is seen as counter-productive to encourage subjectivity when the essential goal is to reduce the population to numbers. The design for

utopia and dystopia are in effect the same: the highest power seeks an effective method to govern to preserve society (Hulzebos 10).

Ishiguro focuses on the aspect of memory as a mechanism for nostalgia, reliving guilt and a medium to get lost in for the remnant of one's life before death brings completion. Kathy and co. never break out of the existing paradigm of order; they do not abandon the fiction of their end but merely register that the end is immanent rather than imminent (Kermode 2000, 25). Like humans everywhere, the end is feared as a figure of death forcing one to make sense of the world. Memory forms an important part on this venture, what Kermode terms as the *aevum*, participating in time and eternity. Kathy's story initiates a world of potentiality where truth is assuredly fictive but within the limited dynamics of the existing paradigm. None of her fictions is a supreme fiction.

Love is an urban myth for the clones; it does not exist for them. It has significant erotic potential which can be seen in the manner in which Kathy, Ruth and Tommy mould their sexualities at the cottages. Love stems from creativity, it is a signifier for life and freedom but their love, like their bodies, will be deconstructed piecemeal. It will not help them survive.

Morality is another issue that Ishiguro discusses through the guardians emphasis on leading good lives. I feel a sense of pride in what we do,” the adult Kathy says. At the same time she points out, “In the end, it wears you out” (Ishiguro 9). They use their limited individual agency only for sacrifice; Ruth's dying wish is for Kathy and Tommy to realise their love. For this purpose, she obtains the address of the mysterious Madame and gives it to Kathy. After the deferral is rejected, Kathy continues to act as a carer for Tommy even as she can see him dying. After his death, memory is her only refuge in the chronicle of their lives that she records as her memoirs. Their interpersonal sacrifices exude greater humanity than the clinical sacrifices they are supposed to make. The circle of love, memory, morality and death lies in the middle of the hegemonical regime of truth that they unknowingly inhabit till they complete.

Their end is full of languor and longing; the slow narrative and the lassitude of Kathy's voice does nothing to thrill the reader. The reader can recognise the way in which Ishiguro has cleverly invented and organized Kathy's murky memories; the existential distress reaches across the ending and affects the reader as much as the hopelessness of Tommy, Ruth and Kathy's haunting love triangle. "The problem is that you've been told and not told", says Miss Lucy at Hailsham (102). They wonder where they come from, whom to love and how to best lead their lives presenting very mundane and common human concerns. The only mistake that they made was to hope, like humans, that this is not how the end would come to take them.

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Kulbhushan Kushal's *Rainbow On Rocks* : A Study

*Dr. Bharati Sharma**

Kulbhushan Kushal, a bilingual poet has been widely reviewed and commented upon for his first collection of poems *Shrinking Horizons* (1989). Equally he has been acclaimed for *philhd* (translation of his Hindi poems). Its really note worthy that apart from his literary interests, he has been exploring new horizons in the field of creative and experimental education. At present he is working as the regional Director, D.A.V. Institutions, Maharashtra and Gujarat.

The book under review is a collection of thirty-seven poems. In the very first poem 'Raw-Deals' that poet feels himself launched to the moon the is none other than the world of joys where wonders of Nature like 'Serpentine streaks', 'rockety ghosts' offer, wondrous promises like 'instant solutions', 'nectar for solvation', The moon here also seems alarming about the recreated definition of love wherein love is not a matter of proposals but strictly a game of disposals. The poet also hints at the discontented faculty of human nature with the geometrical example that friangles ever starry dreaming of becoming rectangles.

The poet sums up the poem expressing unfulfilled expectations of two needakanths as the carriers of luck the poem also feels helpless in swimming the storry stretches in the absence of one neelakanth.

In the very next poem 'Epicenter' the poet seems to be transported from the world of Aestheticism to the realm of spiritualism. Primarily, he provides secured picture of words like unhinged Dupatta', 'fingling of bangles' but the very next moment he imagines about 'param purush' fiddling on the flute & also dreams divine hereby he glorifies the transitoriness of humanbeings with the metaphor like 'Melting bodies'. Noteuorthy here is that these 'Melting Bodies' ever feign to live forever i.e. their voyage towards 'Moksha'.

The poem 'Dark Rainbow' stretches the readers' attention to

those unsolved querries of humanity which the reaches for roots is a trend in modern Indian English poetry tickle us throughout of life. Here the nostalgic symbols like hooks, tender nights, fairies, glow worms make readers thought provoking about the omniscient, omnipresent power of nature which give us warmth of life.

In the following poems 'Dancing Rocks' & 'Girls and Demons', with the touch of oxymoron, personification figures of speech & sound-words like dancing rocks, singing songs the poet unlocks the secret set up of five springs with the view of dancing nature. The poet also feels repentance at meditate upon the aspect of pain and its solutions. Further he says, "It's time to check back/ And to back check / the chemistry of smiler / the mystery of terms / And potency quotient of ideas.

In the poem 'Grammar of Peace' the poet emphasize the course of time wherein the well-known limestone of history like Alexander become the victims of time. And we the forth coming generations are only their repaired faces. We can earn Alexander glory & carve our names like him on the due course of time with the Grammar of Reace we also repeats there chains of vistory in the poem 'Crafty Craft' when he mention: Today Prithviraj Chauhan / Tomorrow Roopbasant /And day after tomorrow / Raid Harish Chandra.

In the poem ' Ghost We Are' the poet also ghosts as the linking bridge of the Divine & the earthly the poem 'Face of The Mask' invokes us to unmask the mask. Our faces are the best possible exposure of our inner goings. The smile and laughter are the eyes of our mask of personality, which remind of the jingle bells. But unpleasant facial exposure has invented a new mask with sanitized faces, sanitized lips that's why the poet invokes us to unmask the masks which brings no pleasure at all.

The poem 'Mysterious Designs' reminds about the day to day seams of Indian life reflecting mythological beliefs, orthodoxy and religious devotion, the singing melodies in deset land, a princess singing mere to Gridhar Gopal / Doosra nd koi, tulshi petals with a Mrdtra.

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In the poem 'Pooran', Pooran, an engimnd, a Paradoxical figure, tamasha, an entertainment, but sometimes, flood of terms gives a pathetic touch to the heart for his real sad lot due to his habit of careless drinking which brings him up to heaven and the pyre is lit for the final show.

In the poem 'Strange times' the poet outlays the thought that old is always gold. Were the poet suggests the picnic going to take some lesson a right before out of Grandma's smile the poem also reminds us of the born strategies through which we fish status and milk shallow pools and shallow smiles and well.

The poem 'Barren Successes' conveys the message to copy with present circumstances whether golden or dark. All the confessions and commitments are meant for the self, 'not on the altar but to your child'. The last stanza celebrates the universally known sermon of the great epic Geeta.

In is the time when our sly smiles
 And our magic stratagems
 Invite us to embrace
 Barren Success
 Mock satiations
 Proxy fulfillments.

In the poem 'Mayd' the poet calls Mayd the corridors approaching towards heaven. Further he strengthens his belongings with the days remembered not, the rainbow in the colored clusters.

The poem 'Vengeance' seems to curse the advance interference with language, nature, emotions, mythological beliefs, society and literature and we are initiated to the topsy turvy world.

The poem 'Neck to Neck' given a pathetic scene of Indian country surroundings. Hunger, poverty, draught, unfulfilled wishes, epidemics, fatal disease, regular knocks of the moneylender, cruel moon lights and sun are the conspirators against the former. The aftereffects of these hardships come in the form of deliverance here

means suicide and celebration i.e. exemption from the hardships at last.

The poem 'Divine Brands', focuses the old beliefs, creeds, in a new dimension with the back of Drona Charya in our studios and Krishna on our pasters and panads. Thus satarically speaking, the poet outlays artificiality and its resultant factors in the lines:

In one shot we presume
 We assume we consume
 Shock immune
 We are

The poem 'Floods Are Here Again' hints at an alarming situation and instructs the man-made anarchy, which has robbed the peace of earth. Resultantly human beings lost the listening and responding efficiency arising out of water, fire, earth, ether and wind. These losses seem the sings of madhap ralyd when all creation willingly slips to a sleep.

The poem 'The Pan Beaches and Breaches' highlights the breaking of relations, rules, quarrels, duty and promises. These breakages bring tremendous losses like rotten freshness and melo dramas of dry to day like.

The poem 'Poetry', the climax of this collective effort in all it seems as if the poet intends to say that poetry is perfection having different zones and dimensions bringing soothing comfort to restless spirits, suggesting solutions, sermons and suggestively for generation.

More Real Than You

*Shanta Acharya, DPhil (Oxon)**

The world may appear to be your oyster,
remember it is not yours to keep or conquer.

You may never discover why you are here,
or if you have a special place in the universe.

There may be planets inhabited by creatures
infinitely more intelligent and conscious than us.

By the time you figure out most things you believe
in are flawed, half a century will have disappeared.

Things change faster than you can imagine,
leaving you running in the same spot fast as you can.

No point in prising open your priceless treasure
with a sword, nothing worth having is got by force.

Build therefore your own world. If you start early
you might learn to make a home of it eventually.

Explore the vast continents of yourself –
nothing in the world is real, nothing more real than you

Ladder of Escape

for Joan Miro

A time for retreat
to a world imagined
perhaps a river made iridescent
by the passage of a swan

a time to rise above
the incompleteness of life
embrace emptiness
invisibility liberation
discover rays of opportunity
wander in ecstasy
guided by tracks of tortoises
plunge into anonymity
that final flight into the light
a cosmic web of stars
caressing the breast of happiness
casting off cobwebs of prejudices
prisons built by us our past selves
drawing with smoke on air
magical things written on the heart
tree of life with ears and eyes
dewdrops trembling in surprise
language beyond grief and joy
prophetic a ladder of escape.

Shanta Acharya was born and educated in Cuttack, Odisha. She won a scholarship to Oxford, and was among the first batch of women admitted to Worcester College in 1979. A recipient of the Violet Vaughan Morgan Fellowship, she was awarded the Doctor of Philosophy for her work on Ralph Waldo Emerson. She was a Visiting Scholar in the Department of English and American Literature and Languages at Harvard University before joining Morgan Stanley, an American investment bank, in London. She worked in the asset management industry and has written extensively on the subject. The author of eleven books, her publications range from poetry, literary criticism and fiction to finance. Her latest, *Imagine: New and Selected Poems*, is published by HarperCollins, India, 2017. Founder of Poetry in the House, Shanta hosted a series of monthly poetry readings at Lauderdale House, Highgate, London, from 1996-2015. In addition to her philanthropic activities, she served twice on the board of trustees of the Poetry Society in the UK. www.shantaacharya.com

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Breaking News

*Anukiran**

It flashed in the news;
disseminated fast..

Was read in
every manor,
“Take assets
along..

when you breathe
your last.”

A frenzy and
mania..
piled up....
to gather and wait.

Bowing down,
to thank..

"O Lord!
Aren't you
just, awesome
and great?"

Then it dawned
on one cynic, that
it couldn't be..

Read the release
again and
again..

Ah! The last
line said..

“What you carry
can have no
weight.”

All dazed,
appalled and
amazed..

“Why O! Lord..”

One man in
a corner,
giggled and
grinned..

“Ah! My
load isn't
heavy at all..

It's only
warmth and
echoes of
life, I have
raised.”

Matter of The Natter

*Dr. Kulbhushan Kushal**

The snippets of shadows
The conflicts surrounding the snippets
The helplessness from the conflicts

The conversations of the shadows often

Are not audible
Shadows late in the day
Sometimes in bazaars
Sometimes on shores of seas
Sometimes in barren stretches
Engage in banter

These living organisms
In different languages
Engage in conversation
Day and night they scamper
Amidst the congestion
Of noise and conflicts
They pave paths
For one another
And very often on straight and simple roads
They lose their way

They translate
The language of their own gestures
Their businesses perhaps
Are their own proclivities
Each move of theirs
Is directed by prompters
And their statements

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Are reined by language

In the embrace of their beaux
 The girlfriends wither
 And in the embrace of the girlfriends
 Shatter like glass
 The beau's egos
 The trades of living lovers
 How trading happens
 The norms of their barter

They are-
 Encircled within promises and resolutions
 Their seven-hued pledges
 Like red-yellow-green kulfi
 Melts with a little heat
 Their enthusiasm dampens
 These living beings
 Are siblings of shadows

We know the micro-geography
 Of their uncovered bodies
 We know the heights of
 The crows, the pigeons and the parrots
 Sparrows, bats and owls
 Soaring within them
 Bonding all
 The geometrical shapes within them
 We have imagined
 A gigantic square
 Several times we have broken
 All their triangles
 And then joined it
 With the seven strings of the rainbow

We alone echo their voices
 We alone play in their backyards
 On the sofas of their drawing-rooms
 It is we who are perched
 We lend ears to
 Their unsaid anecdotes

Far from understanding
 The talk of the shadows
 They still are not able to listen
 To the sound of their body
 They have eaten up
 All the mountains
 With dynamite
 They blow up the cliffs
 From sand they make cement
 And cement they turn to sand

Fatigued and drained out
 Darting in the corridors
 Of pictures and sketches
 These lively folks
 Seek the blessings
 Of deities traditional
 They are the subject of our discussion
 Often these living beings

When will they be able to know?
 The reality of shadows
 When will they understand
 Our natter
 And the history
 Behind our natter!!

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