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## Editorial

These days much emphasis is given to the communicative aspect of language, particularly that of English language. It appears as if the only purpose of English language now is to communicate with others in whatever way you can and whatever utterances you are able to produce to communicate your ideas. A careful study of this phenomenon reveals the factors that have resulted in such an understanding of language and language use. First of all, this understanding is the result of a postmodernist cultural imperative where the advanced capital orientation has brought the people from different places close to one another and they have to communicate in some common language that can serve the purpose. Another important reason for the acceptance of only the communicative aspect of language in contemporary Indian society, we may agree or not, is the Indian people's constant outflow to the countries where they have to converse in English. These and the other factors like the belief that the one who fluently speaks English is modern, well educated and hence respected add to the value awarded to the communicative aspect of English language. Apart from this, the setback received by the modernist thought of standardization of culture, literature and language has also contributed to the emergence of a postmodernist rejection of standardization of things in the name of universalization suppressing multiplicity of possibilities.

Young learners are often encouraged to communicate in English without bothering about the grammatical correctness of language. Sometimes they are prompted to learn the things to clear their IELTS tests only. Despite the value of such a learning that serves specific purposes, we must keep in mind that all the learners are not to go abroad. Moreover, even the illiterate do manage to communicate in a foreign land by a simple imitative learning of certain expressions.

There are the others who regret that our young learners fail to communicate in English and fail miserably in interviews. They propagate introduction of specific expressions in the syllabi so that the students learn to pronounce a few words correctly. Some time a small list of words is prescribed in their syllabus so that they learn at least a few words. Instead of adding to their learning such an exercise rather limits their scope for learning. They mug up the correct pronunciation of the words prescribed and do well in the examination without learning

anything. Moreover, they are not supposed to use only the words prescribed in their syllabus.

Language is not merely speech. An effective approach to the learning to any second language must involve all the skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Until and unless all these aspects are given their due roles the process of learning a language effectively remains a distant dream. It can be achieved through a judicious use of grammar translation method, Direct method and communicative approach to language learning.

## **An Exploration of Jhumpa Lahiri's Fictional Art in *Interpreter of Maladies***

*Dr. N. K. Neb\**

Short story as a distinct genre has not been able to achieve the desired success and popularity in Indian-English fiction. In spite of its ancient history which finds roots in Vedic tales, it came on the scene of Indian-English fiction much later than other forms of art. The neglect shown to this form of fiction can be ascertained from the fact that Indo-English short story writers who have written novels also are better known as novelists. For example, the writers like Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Khushwant Singh Manohar Malgonkar and women writers like Ruth Praver Jhabwala, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and Shobha De are better known for their novels rather than short-stories. It does not mean that short story as a form of writing lacks the potential to match the expectations of the readers or the properties of a powerful literary medium to express the complexity informing the evolving nature of life. The success that Jhumpa Lahiri's first collection of stories *Interpreter of Maladies : Stories of Bengal, Boston and Beyond* has achieved is enough to dispel all doubts about the success of short story as a form of fiction. In this paper an attempt has been made to explore different aspects of Lahiri's short stories that show her skill as a fiction writer.

Lahiri's presentation of human experience informing a close interaction among various cultures shows her sharp sense of selection of the subject matter. Her giving an indication about her fictional concerns through the subtitle of the collection—*Stories of Bengal, Boston and Beyond*—further reveals her understanding as an artist. Her choice of the fictional material has an immediate appeal for the readers in the contemporary world of cultural mix at a mass level. Lahiri's concentration on the life and experiences of the people freed from geographical and national peculiarities and fixity of culture marks the global nature of her concerns. Instead of building a particular cultural context based on a specific nation Lahiri's stories show interactive forms of life and the impact of the emerging forms of life on human experience. It not only enlarges the scope of her fictional work but also

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matches contemporary reality in which life no longer remains limited to traditional patterns marking regional boundaries and has a tendency to spill over to different nations and cultures. Lahiri's achievement lies in a successful presentation of the variety of experiences informing complexity of emerging forms of life. The life and experiences depicted in these stories have been fictionalised in such a subtle and effective way that the readers can understand and realize the problems, dilemmas and complexity underlying apparently smooth and uncomplicated experiences of the diasporic people.

Lahiri's presentation of the displaced and exiled people's experiences marks the major thrust of her short stories. Instead of showing the working of power structures at the political level that influence people's lives the story writer has concentrated on the subtle ways that result in people's alienation and a feeling of being the other in an alien land. Her concern for the displaced people has been noticed by Tejinder also, "*We find that in her short-stories she has portrayed some of the problems engendered by the experience of myrancy and diaspora such as displacement, rootlessness, fragmentation, discrimination, marginalization and crisis in identity*" (Kaur 2002 : 121–122). Instead of portraying the diasporas as eternal victims Lahiri's stories tend to bring out their attempts to adjust in the new culture. These people's efforts to find roots in new places and the multiple ways in which they react in certain situations in exile show the writer's keen observation and deep understanding. For example, Boori Ma in 'A Real Durwan', tries to find some space by working in the houses of other Bengali people and indulging in long litanies about her past. Mrs. Sen in 'Mrs. Sen's' always longs to go back to her home in India, and keeps her association with her earlier home alive through letters, thoughts about family and listening to the cassettes of Ravi Shankar. In a way, these things do not allow these people to shun a feeling of displacement. Similarly, Mr. Pirzada, in the story, 'When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine' keeps his watch, "set to local time in Dacca, eleven hours ahead" (p.30). However they use different ways to adjust in the new culture.

Apart from the presentation of the experiences of the diaspora people, the expression of the complex nature of human behaviour and interpersonal relationships also marks an interesting and significant feature of Lahiri's fictional art. Traditionally, human behaviour is explained and understood on the basis of stable moral values. Consequently,

fictional characters are also categorized in terms of good or bad evoking the set norms of human behaviour. Jhumpa Lahiri's stories mark a shift from the traditional understanding of life and experience. Her stories tend to bring out multiple forms of human behaviour and typical human responses in certain situations rather than attempting to define human life according to some fixed code. It makes the writer depict a different type of characters. The people inhabiting Lahiri's fictional world are different from their cultural stereotypes. Their behaviour is relevant in the provisional context and does not necessarily reveal their essential nature. Sometimes the reader having a traditional orientation is puzzled to see the unexpected responses of these characters. For example, in the story, 'A Temporary Matter' Shoba's decision to leave Shukumar exhibits the complexity informing human behaviour. She does not show any signs of discontentment earlier when she undergoes abortion in the absence of her husband. But his revealing the gender of the dead child incites her to take the decision to live separately. The complexity of human behaviour becomes more striking when Shoba's earlier behaviour, revealing her calculated movements is taken into account. She seems to have already made up her mind and is in search of an excuse. These words express her planned behaviour :

It was obvious that she'd rehearsed the lines. All this time she'd been looking for an apartment, testing the water pressure, asking a Realtor if heat and hot water were included in the rent (p. 21).

As mentioned earlier, the writer's concern in *Interpreter of Maladies* is to bring out complex nature of human behaviour and human relationships. This aspect of human life is revealed in certain significant situations. In order to grasp the depth and complexity informing human life the writer has tried to describe not only the situations in which different characters reveal their thoughts and behaviour but also the subtle ways of their behaviour that exhibit underlying thought patterns and peculiarities of their life. The fictional purpose, in this context, does not match the linear development of plot related to some incident having epic dimensions. In Lahiri's stories, it is not the incidents rather the kind of situations and the possible forms of human behaviour that becomes the centre of interest. Therefore, different stories in this collection mark the significance of the development of particular situations. For example, in 'A Temporary Matter' the situation

that finds relevance in furthering the plot takes shape out of the incident related to power failure. At the thematic level the situation arising after Shukumar's revelation about the gender of their dead child and Shoba's declaration to live separately becomes more significant. In both these cases, the incidents are not as important as the situations that they lead to. Similarly, 'When Mr. Pirzada Came To Dine', marks its significance in the situation that develops in Lilia's house as a result of the war. In the title story, 'Interpreter of Maladies' again the incident related to Bobby being a bastard child is not as important as the situation arising out of this revelation. The interest of these different stories is to capture the responses and reactions of different people in these situations.

Another aspect of Jhumpa Lahiri's fictional art related to the development of different situations is her concern to create a story instead of telling. She uses simple incidents and happenings to create meaningful situations that form useful narrative units. For example, 'The Third and Last Continent' concentrates on Mrs. Croft's isolated and lonely life in her old age. Her interest in the achievements of her country and the way she lives without depending and concerning much about others show her as a bold woman. Her being a widow and living alone does not seem to be any cause of trouble for her. The details about her life and behaviour help create an interesting and meaningful narrative situation when a contrast is built through the narrator's details about his own mother :

It was widowhood that had driven my own mother insane.... My mother refused to adjust to life without him, instead she sank deeper into a world of darkness from which neither I nor my brother, nor concerned relatives, nor psychiatric clinics on Rishibihari Avenue could save her (p. 187).

These details not only express multiple responses of people in certain situations but also tend to highlight cultural peculiarities. Similarly, the situation created in 'Interpreter of Maladies' after Mrs. Das's sharing her secret with Mr. Kapasi facilitates the creation of the story. In 'Bibi Haldar's Treatment' also, the complex situation resulting from the unexplained secret about her pregnancy builds an atmosphere of suspense instead of telling the story. In almost all of the stories in this collection the writer's concern is not to give the details about incidents and narrate the happenings rather it is more related to the development of particular atmosphere to exercise the structuring of a story.

Apart from creating a story through the development of different situations and recording varied responses of the characters the insertion of meaningful sentences in the fictional details forms an effective device in Lahiri's fictional art. While providing minute details about people and places the writer leaves certain hints that find their relevance and significance at some later stage. Sometimes, these elements add new dimensions to the fictional details while at others they provide useful hints about the behaviour of certain characters. The presence of these narrative elements makes the later incidents, happenings and revelations more effective. In the story, 'Interpreter of Maladies' while talking about Mr. Das the narrator says, "A clean shaven man, he looked exactly like a magnified version of Ronny" (p. 44). This sentence comes out to be more meaningful when Mrs. Das tells that Bobby was not Raj's son. At this stage the reader notices the emphasis on Raj being magnified version of Ronny and not that of Bobby. In the story 'A Temporary Matter' Shoba's character trait hinted in the sentence, "She was the type to prepare for surprises", becomes more effective in expressing her nature when she gives a shocking surprise to Shukumar. Another fictional device that gains significance is the mention of travel books and tour guides about different countries used by the people to have an understanding of different cultures. In 'Interpreter of Maladies' Mr. Das's understanding of India is based on "a paper back tourbook" and in 'The Third and Last Continent' the narrator uses 'The Student Guide to North America'. These fictional elements point out the shallow nature of the people's understanding of culture. Therefore, much remains elusive and incomprehensible to them and they remain confused and alienated in other cultures.

Instead of the incidents and happenings depicted in causal pattern the interest in Lahiri's stories lies in the description of small activities, behaviour of characters and their reactions. It not only maintains the interest of the readers but also shows the writer's keen observation of different forms of life. The fictional narrative concentrating on minor actions and giving minute descriptions keeps the reader attentive. It marks a calculated use of different fictional elements that facilitate the creation of a conducive atmosphere. In the absence of explosive situations the stories in this collection do not mark a particular climax or a definite end. The nature of the fictional narratives in these stories requires an active and attentive role of the reader. It is left to the reader

to make sense of the fictional details presented in different stories. In this context, the most striking examples are the stories, "The Treatment of Bibi Haldar", 'Sexy' 'Mrs. Sen's' and 'Interpreter of Maladies'. Her other stories also exhibit ample scope for multiple interpretations. It brings out a different nature of her stories which can be called writerly texts in Barthes' terminology. In this connection, we must understand that, "A readerly text (or a readerly approach to a text) allows the reader only to be a passive consumer of a fixed, given meaning; a writerly text (or a writerly approach to a text) turns the reader into a producer" (Krishnaswamy 2001 : 41). Jhumpa Lahiri's stories are open ended and certainly demand from the reader to exercise his creative abilities to give meaning to the experiences fictionalised in her stories. It is pertinent to note that the incidents like Shoba's reaction in, 'A Temporary Matter', Mrs. Das's interaction with Mr. Kapasi in, 'Interpreter of Maladies' the pregnancy of Bibi Haldar in, 'The Treatment of Bibi Haldar', the behaviour of Mrs. Sen in 'Mrs. Sen's' and the narrator's experience in the last story do not point out to some single, dogmatic explanation.

Lahiri's attempt to show human identity freed from theocratical, political and gender hierarchy that used to define human life in traditional societies enriches the fictional discourse in her stories. It brings out the necessity and relevance of understanding new forms of life from new and varied perspectives. The indeterminacy informing nation based identity is indicated in the story, 'When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine.' Mr. Pirzada, who earlier belonged to India, "is no longer considered Indian" (p. 25), he became a Pakistani after the division of India. Interestingly, his native place Dacca becomes a part of Bangladesh further displacing his identity as a citizen. Similarly, there are other characters like Raj, Boori Ma, Shoba, Shukumar who acquire a new identity after being displaced and exiled from their native countries. Moreover, the identity based on gender roles also finds a different expression in Lahiri's stories. For example, the behaviour and activities of Shoba and Shukumar offer an interesting example. Shukumar remains at home while Shoba works outside the house :

The more Shoba stayed out, the more she began putting in extra hours at work and taking on additional projects, the more he wanted to stay in, not even leaving to get the mail, or to buy fruit or wine at the stores by the trolley shop (p. 2).

But the role reversal, if at all it is, has not been presented to mark the destabilisation of the stereotypical identity of a woman, instead it brings out emerging forms of life in changed circumstances.

An interesting aspect of Lahiri's fictional presentation involves the depiction of man-woman relationships in contemporary society. As the people inhabiting Lahiri's fictional world do not have their roots fixed in a particular culture man-woman relationship here finds expression at the individual level instead of marking a grip of specific cultural and social norms. The conflict informing these relationships is related to personal whims of the characters instead of social or moral dogmas. For example the story, 'A Temporary Matter' brings out the marital discord resulting from conflicting nature of the behaviour and thoughts of the couple. Their individual whims make their behaviour incompatible for each other. In 'This Blessed House' the minute aspects of behaviour point out the sterility underlying the relationship between Sanjeev and Twinkle. Their priorities, individual likes and dislikes result in silent hostility. The narrator's words reveal this in a very subtle but effective way, "These objects meant something to Twinkle, but they meant nothing to him (Sanjeev). They irritated him" (p.138). Sanjeev being related to a different culture turns out to be a fanatic which marks his failure to adopt the new culture. It marks his typical attitude towards his wife's concerns who, "was twenty-seven and recently abandoned, he had gathered, by an American who had tried and failed to be an actor" (p.143). Apparently, he keeps his cool and behaves like a good husband but his dislike for his wife can be ascertained from these words also, "Most of all he hated it because he knew that Twinkle liked it" (p.157). It shows how the seemingly smooth-going man-woman relationship is hiding perpetual unease and turmoil. Similarly, Mrs. Das's giving birth to a bastard son demythicises the concept of marriage based on faith, trust and loyalty. Marriage in these cases turns out to be a live-in arrangement instead of a sacred bond based on love and mutual understanding. It brings out the functional and pragmatic nature of man-woman relationships depicted by Jhumpa Lahiri. What baffles the reader in this regard is that these strained relations are not because of gender hostility informing man's oppressive behaviour and attitude. It rather turns out to be a result of the clash of personality or identity emerging from the process of defining one's identity in relation to the other. The hostility towards the other seems to be the natural outcome

of the underlying fear of one's own identity being eclipsed or overshadowed by the other. The complex nature of man-woman relationship presented in Jhumpa Lahiri's stories makes them multi-dimensional and thematically rich.

As the stories in *Interpreter of Maladies* concentrate on subtleties of human behaviour and complexity informing human nature, there is very little outward action to mark the development of plot. In fact, no major spatial movement or major incidents having an impact on the material reality concerning different characters takes place. The characters are shown reacting to certain situations they confront at different stages in life, particularly as exiled and displaced human beings. Descriptions about minute aspects of behaviour, gestures, scenes related to the life around, and building of a particular atmosphere result in the slow moving pace of the narrative. For example, the minute details about Shoba's appearance and her cosmetic looks have been presented through carefully selected details: Her cranberry lipstick was visible only on the outer reaches of her mouth, and her eyeliner had left charcoal patches beneath her lower lashes (p.1). The precise, concrete, picturesque nature of the descriptions, however brief they may be, creates an effective image of certain characters. For example, the details about Mr. Pirzada with his insulated ears, graying hair, Thickly lashed eyes shaded with a trace of camphor, a generous moustche that turned up playfully at the ends, and a mole shaped like a flattened raisin in the very center of his left cheek" (p. 28) bring this character alive before the readers. These details not only help maintain the interest of the reader but also compensate for the lack of action in the plot.

The slow-moving pace of the fictional narrative in these stories matches the building of an atmosphere charged with a sense of expectation. This sense of expectation about the responses of characters and their possible reactions becomes more intense as the reader develops a sense of association with the characters. In the process of reading the story the interaction between the expected and the unexpected that gets unfolded at a later stage gives the reader sudden jerks. The sudden emergence of a new situation makes it difficult for the reader to comprehend it in clear terms. It involves the reader in the exercise of making sense of the forms of life he faces in new circumstances. Shoba's announcement of her decision to live separately comes as a shock not only to her husband but also to the reader. A simple game

being played between the husband and the wife turns out to be a game of deception being played between the couple. Shoba's thoughts and behaviour baffle the reader. The reader fails to understand why she took such a harsh decision as she did not seem to mind Shukumar's absence during her hospitalisation for the delivery of the child. In 'Interpreter of Maladies' Mrs. Das's behaviour towards Mr. Kapasi, after she has revealed her secret to him remains incomprehensible to the reader. Her efforts and gestures that mark her intention to develop some kind of an association with Dr. Kapasi may be explained in terms of her need to find a person to share her secret. But her indifference verging on contempt for the person with whom she has shared her secret remains unexplained. It seems something altogether unexpected. Similarly, the gradual change in the narrator's attitude towards his young wife in 'The Third and the Last Continent' also exhibits the interaction of the expected and the unexpected to make the fictional discourse more effective. In order to create the desired impact a particular atmosphere has been built in these stories through minute details and descriptions so that the reader may have a feel of the reality inhabited by the characters.

Lahiri's skilful and artistic deployment of the narrators marks her maturity as a writer. The way the fictional discourse takes shape in these stories shows Lahiri's success in maintaining a specific distance from the world and the world view created in her stories. The narrative voice, be it the first person narrator or the third person omniscient narrator, cannot be identified with the moral voice of the author. Lahiri's concentration on human predicament in specific circumstances instead of exploring the reasons and identifying the factors responsible for it facilitates the creation of an objective narrative stance. Therefore, her stories seem to be free from authoritative authorial intrusion. For most of the times the authorial voice remains hidden behind the narrator's considerations and if at all it seems to come forth it emerges in the form of sudden hints dropped through descriptions, incidents and characters in a very subtle way. In this context, Lahiri's concern for the displaced and the exiled people can be traced in the treatment meted out to Boori Ma. Her exploration of the diasporas' concern and attachment with their native place can be ascertained from Mr. Pirzada's interest in the war going on at Dacca when he himself is away in America. The contrast in the American people's attitude towards this

incident helps express the intensity informing Pirzada's feelings. Lilia, a small child, notices this gap between the behaviour of Pirzada, who remains glued to the tv. news, and the attitude of Dora's father :Her father was lying on the couch, reading a magazine, with a glass of wine on the coffee table, and there was saxophone music playing on the stereo (p. 39). Such details gain fictional significance not through their association with the author's perspective but in the way the reader interprets them. In the same way, her not projecting any culture in terms of superior or inferior and her emphasis on complexities, contradictions and conflicts informing human experience in the emerging scenario of cultural mix make her stories significant fictional creations.

An effective use of irony forms a significant feature of Lahiri's fictional art. The ironical presentation of the fictional material awards a particular complexity to the narrative discourse and brings out the interactive role of different elements. Sometimes she uses ironical titles to bring specific meaning to the fictional details. For example, in 'A Temporary Matter' the incident related to the electricity failure apparently seems to be the temporary matter referred to in the story. The ironical nature of the title gets unfolded in an artistic way. In fact, it is the marital relations between Shoba and Shukumar which turn out to be temporary. By simple extension it becomes an indication about the nature of modern marriages which turn out to be a marriage of convenience only. Similarly, the title, 'This Blessed House', exhibits its ironical nature when the real nature of the relationship between the couple in this story is taken into consideration. Their small, subtle but meaningful conflicts and arguments make their house a cursed house. Apart from this, irony is at work in the life, experiences and thoughts of different characters. Boori Ma, who looks after the people's houses and virtually functions as a watch dog is not only turned out of the locality but also accused of committing a theft. Having turned her out, people now set out in search of a real durwan ! The subtle ways in which irony remains operative in the thoughts and behaviour of different characters can be observed from the words of Lakshmi's cousin when she says that she was ready to forgive her husband for her boy. The use of irony in Jhumpa Lahiri's stories brings out her careful and calculated structuring of the fictional narratives. The way it makes fictional presentation artistically and thematically rich marks Lahiri's craftsmanship.

Lahiri's fictional art involving thematic diversity, expression of complex human behaviour presented with the help of the effective use of different narrative devices shows her skill and achievement as a story-writer. It further strengthens the view that the potential of an art form can be understood and ascertained when a mature artist like Lahiri tends to explore it. Thus, Lahiri's stories not only show the writer's achievement but also help forward the view that short-story as a form of fiction has much scope in the times to come.

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## Freudian Reading of Franz Kafka's "A Country Doctor"

*Dr. Ajoy Batta\**

*Franz Kafka was born on July 3, 1883, in Prague. With the publications of his posthumous works, he became famous throughout the world. Majority studies of Kafka's fictions generally present his works as resulting of his legal profession, in the course failing to record the influences of various writers and philosophers that form an important factor of his fictions. In order to achieve a newer perspective in Kafka's fictions, the present paper focuses the influence of Sigmund Freud on Kafka that can be seen particularly his short story "A Country Doctor."*

Franz Kafka used an unusual technique for telling his story of "A Country Doctor." He wrote in the first person, thereby imparting an exciting degree of immediacy to the story. The story is also exciting because of its fragmentary character — a symptom of Kafka's searching mind reflected here in an almost stammering rhythm. This effect is heightened by a lavish use of semicolons that chop up the already short and forceful sentences into even smaller units. An atmosphere of quasi-detached objectivity stands in almost eerie contrast to the story's dramatic impact and underlying miraculous character. Typical of Kafka, however, the language reflects the complete union between dream world and reality; in fact, the horses, ghostly embodiments of irrational forces, seem to drive, besides the doctor, even the author farther on. Kafka's recurring motif of the hunt (compare this story with "The Hunter Gracchus" and "The Burrow") has found expression in these galloping sentences, each seeming to chase the one before it.

The story begins in the past, switches to the present in the rape scene, reverts to the past, and finally shifts back to the present at the end, thus elevating the final catastrophe to the level of timelessness. At an even faster pace, images that share no logical connection with each other rush toward the story's last sentence: "A false alarm on the night bell once answered — it cannot be made good, not ever." Here is a good starting point for examining the story. From the story's last sentence; it becomes evident that the whole story is the inevitable consequence of a single mistake. By following the call — a mere

hallucination, a nightmare — the doctor triggers a long chain of disastrous events. His visit to the patient seems to be a visit into the bewildering depths of his own personality, for there is no actual ringing of the bell. The strange (and estranged) patient waiting for him does not really exist outside the doctor's imagination; he may be seen as part of the doctor's personality, playing a role comparable to that of the "distant friend" in "The Judgment" or the gigantic insect in "The Metamorphosis." "A fine wound is all I brought into the world," the patient complains, thereby suggesting that the doctor is his potential healer and belongs to him. During his entire journey, the doctor never leaves the vast regions of his unconscious, of which his patient is perhaps the darkest aspect.

In portraying this nightmare, Kafka has succeeded in portraying the situation of the man who wants to help but cannot. Kafka may well have seen himself and the whole profession of writers in the position of the country doctor: a man fighting against ignorance, selfishness and superstition, he remains exposed to "the frost of this most unhappy of ages." This is a diagnosis not only of a specific situation but also of the condition of our whole age. This is why the patient's question is not if the doctor will heal him or cure him, but if he will save him. "(Kafka, *The Metamorphosis* 240). That's how the people act in my district; they always expect the impossible from the doctor," he says, explaining why he — or, on another plane, the writer — cannot be of any real help to the patient. He finds himself confronted with people whose consciousness is still attached to the realm of magic. They reveal this by stripping the doctor of his clothes and laying him in the bed alongside the patient. "The utterly simple" tune following this ritual reflects their primitivism, which would not hesitate to use the doctor as a scapegoat and kill him if his art should not work (Kafka, *The Metamorphosis* 241).

Although "In the Penal Colony," written two years earlier, is a better expression of Kafka's horror of World War I, there is much concern here for innocent scapegoats. The anxiety prevailing throughout this story also reflects Kafka's problems resulting from his second engagement to Felice Bauer and his deteriorating health. Shortly after his condition was diagnosed as tuberculosis, he wrote to Max Brod that he had predicted this disease himself and that his anticipation occurred in the wound of the sick boy in "A Country Doctor."

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There are many more autobiographical elements, none of them "proving" anything in the strict sense of the word, but all of them shedding some additional light on the gloomy world of Kafka. The story is dedicated to his father, who ignored it completely. The misunderstanding between the physician and the patient is a reflection of the equally barren relationship between the old Kafka and the young Kafka. Knowing to what extremes Kafka tends to carry the art of name-giving, it is easy to see that the servant girl's name, Rose, is by no means accidental: "reserved" is the color of the meticulously described wound, and the color rose, as well as the flower, is an age-old symbol of love in its manifold facets. There is no need to insist on one specific meaning of the word, if only because Kafka himself does not. The meaning is clear, considering that December 1917, the year after he wrote "A Country Doctor," brought Kafka's final separation from Felice, his "rose" in both senses of the word. The groom represents Kafka's sometimes almost obsessive fear of a sexually superior rival. On this subject, he wrote that Felice did not stay alone and that someone else got close to her who did not have the problems which he, Kafka, had to face. In the story, the groom certainly gets to Rose easily, and if she says "no," she nevertheless runs into the house fully aware of her fate. "If they misuse me for sacred reasons, I let that happen too," the doctor says. (Kafka, *The Metamorphosis* 241). Yet his sacrifice would be senseless because it is beyond a physician's power to help an age spiritually out of kilter. It is out of kilter because, as everywhere in Kafka's work, people have lost their faith and have taken to living "outside the law," listening to the false prophets of unbridled technological progress and conformism. The boy does not trust the doctor, and his family displays the subservient and naive behaviour of the average patient. As the doctor puts it: They have discarded their old beliefs; the minister sits at home, unravelling his vestments, one by one; but the doctor is supposed to be omnipotent." This is why the song of "Oh be joyful, all you patients — the doctor's laid in bed beside you!" is the "new but faulty song": the empirical and the transcendental realms are no longer one; the only way they meet is in the form of a clash leading to a "false alarm."

Only if we understand Kafka's notion of disease as resulting from seclusion can we begin to understand the country doctor. He is the subject and the object of his long quest or, expressed differently,

the psychoanalyst of his own inner landscape (on another level, our whole secularised age) and the patient. And Kafka, though interested in Freud's teachings, regarded at least the therapeutical part of psychoanalysis as a hopeless error. According to Kafka, anxiety and concomitant alienation are the direct consequence of man's spiritual withering, and all psychoanalysis can possibly do is discover the myriad pieces of one's shattered universe. Without his doing anything special, the doctor draws exactly the help he needs when he kicks the door of the pigsty. Like his whole trip, the sudden appearance of horses, groom, and gig bears the mark of the miraculous and the supernatural. Ever since Plato's (Phaidros) famous parable of the chariot being pulled by one white horse and one black horse, symbolising the bright and the dark aspects of irrationality (rationality is in charge and tries to steer a middle course), horses have symbolised instincts and drives. The fact that they have come out of a pigsty here underscores their animalistic nature. Twice the doctor complains that his own horse died, and both times his remarks are accompanied by winter scenes, suggesting the barrenness of the (spiritual) wasteland around him. Right away, the horses respond to the fiery "gee up" of the groom, who has already demonstrated his kinship with their world by calling them "brother" and "sister." The doctor also yells "gee up" at the end but, time being the correlative of experience, they will only crawl "slowly, like old men"; escaping from the patient and erring through the snowy wastes, the doctor has no experience by which to divide up time and, consequently, loses his orientation. The horses take over completely, at any rate, covering the distance to the patient's farm in an incredibly short period of time which, symbolically enough, is exactly the time it takes the groom to subdue Rose.

Greatly adding to the story's dramatic impact, the doctor's night journey and Rose's rape are merged here on a logically inexplicable level. (Kafka, *The Metamorphosis* 240-41). "You never know what you're going to find in your house," Rose says, "and we both laughed." This line may be a clue. It is important that it is she who says this statement; she is better attuned to the realm of irrational forces than he, who spends most of his trip regretting that he has never noticed her, much less enjoyed her physically and spiritually. Now he realises his negligence, but now it is too late because she has already been sacrificed to the groom. Her comment and their laughter at the sudden appearance

of the horses reveal that these sensual and spiritual elements are present, but that they need to be brought out. On a literal level, this happens as they come out of the pigsty. The closing picture of the fur coat trailing in the snow behind the doctor mirrors the helplessness of one who has been "betrayed." Travelling through endless wastes on his straying gig, the doctor is doomed to see the symbol of warmth and security without being able to reach it. Naked and cold and gone astray, the country doctor is the pitiful picture of disoriented mankind drifting over the treacherous landscape of its sick collective consciousness. And there is no end in sight because "he was used to that." The question of the doctor's guilt provokes thoughts of uncertainty and ambiguity. As everywhere else in Kafka's work, the hero does not commit a crime or even a grave error. We are apt to get closer to the situation when we realise that he manoeuvres himself, or permits himself to be manoeuvred, into a state of mind which forces him to refrain from concrete decisions and commitments. In this sense, he becomes guilty of the classic existential sin — failing or refusing to become involved. By not taking his profession seriously and therefore lacking in responsibility, he forfeits his only chance of taking the decisive step from mere vegetating to conscious living. True, as a medical man he cannot be expected to save a patient whose sickness is, above all, of a spiritual nature. Yet he is guilty because he lacks the will to try his level best; he is afraid to act like a world reformer and pats himself on the shoulder for doing so much work for so little pay. Nor does he bother to view the wound as the result of the complex but undeniable interrelationship between physical and psychological factors of which Kafka himself was very much aware. Symptomatic of our age, the country doctor is the one-dimensional man who has lost a sense of participation, not only in the sphere of the sensual but also in that of the spiritual. Like the doctor himself, his pack of patients has stepped outside the law and into chaos. From there, they cannot help, the point being that they have lost the capability of doing that long ago. Whoever breaks out of Kafka's human circle alienates him to the point of death. Kafka is most clear in this story: the impossibility of curing our age is his subject.

"A Country Doctor" can be seen as an outcome of Kafka's interest in the theories of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). "A Country Doctor," is the literary expression of Kafka's attitude to Freudian psychology (Marson 146). Kafka first became aware of the theories of

Freud in 1912, when he attended the series of lectures and discussions at the house of Frau Bertha Fanta (146). The same year Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams (Die Traumdeutung)* became popular. This work of Freud influenced many European writers, who at that time were having the interest in the field of psychoanalysis or related subjects (Wagenbach 199). Kafka, too, like many European writers got influenced by the theories of Freud. He read *The Interpretation of Dreams (Die Traumdeutung)* with great interest. In this context, Leither aptly writes: "Kafka, who came to maturity in the intellectual atmosphere of the early days of psychoanalytical discoveries and formulations, recorded his own avid reading of Freud's work as it appeared" (Leither 342). Kafka first mentioned Freud's name on September 23, 1912, in connection with his story "The Judgment" (Marson 146). The scene of "The Judgment" in which Georg undresses and puts his father on the bed is very much similar to the section of *The Interpretation of Dreams*, where Freud in his own dream appears as his father's, male nurse caring for his old and feeble father. Another similarity can be found in the scene when Georg takes his decision to visit his father's room and informs of his intention about telling his distant friend about his privately contracted engagement is very similar to Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Freud's protagonist, too, goes to his father's neighbouring room to inform him about his engagement. It's also noteworthy that there had been striking similarities of Freud's relationship with his father and Kafka's with his own father. In fact, Kafka at this stage of his life was "more interested in Freud the man than in Freud the psychologist" (147-48).

It was again in 1916-17, approximately after five years, the influence of Freud on Kafka can be visualised particularly in connection with his story "A Country Doctor." This story can be called Freudian because it was written during the time when Kafka's interest in psychoanalysis was at its height (150). "A Country Doctor" can be seen as propagating Kafka's views on psychoanalysis, as it shows the predicament of a doctor, who despite an unusual situation engages himself to cure a patient, but in the end fails, as he finds the problem of the patient rather mental and psychological. This situation of the country doctor establishes a close parallel with Freud himself, who in his medical career had to confront similar patients that could not be cured by medical means. As a result, Freud established the new psychological

approach so as to save them by initially engaging his own subconscious self in the process. The doctor in the beginning of the story too encounters his own subconscious self when in order to get the horse to reach his patient he opens the door of his pig-sty. The magical appearance of horses represents "the new psychological forces that Freud discovered and that made it possible to reach patients inaccessible to traditional medicine" (151). Thus, Kafka in the beginning of the story traces the origins of psychoanalysis that highlights his interest in Freud.

After reaching the patient's bed side, the doctor is unable to locate his patient's problem and declares him fit. It is only after his second examination of the patient that he is in a position to locate his wound. Freud encountered exactly the same situation in his examination of his patients as in his life he was unable to find many of the patient's problems with the traditional medical means. It is only by the new methods of psychology their problems became apparent. Further, in the story, there are other instances where we can trace the influence of Freud on Kafka. For example, in order to save the patient, the doctor is placed on the same bed with the patient. The treatment can be seen at psychoanalytical level. As the doctor is shown to treat his patient in a way in which he engages his own subconscious self that is not possible in the normal medical process. This similar situation was too encountered by Freud in his medical life where he used his own personality as a source for the success of his theories. Towards the end of "A Country Doctor" Kafka also shows the outcome of this psychoanalytical treatment, where the patient first shows a lack of doctor's capabilities in saving him, but slowly accepts the doctor and his new methodology that provides him with some comfort before his death. So in the end, this new treatment truly bestows some comfort to the patient but fails in curing his disease. Kafka, in the end, can be seen showing the empirical representation of psychoanalysis and Freud, where he rejects the curative claims of psychoanalysis.

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## Uncensoring the Censored : A Critique of Chughtai's and Manto's Controversial Short Stories

*Dr. Shivani Vashist\**

*"There is no such thing as a moral or immoral book. Books are well written or badly written. That is all". (Oscar Wilde The Picture of Dorian Gray)*

Literature in the past was constantly under scrutiny with either the public or the government passing judgement on the contents of the books. I agree with Milton who in his polemical work *Areopagitica* categorically mentions that the judgement must be left with the readers instead of it being with a handful of people. Some books that were banned in the past were- Lawrence's *The Chatterley's Lover*, Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, George Orwell's 1984 and many more. Some controversial writers like Taslima Nasreen, Salman Rushdie, Ishmat Chughtai and many more who wrote in an unconventional manner, faced extreme criticism from the readers. Freedom of speech and expression in terms of political, social and economic rights of a person is a fundamental right. Then, do we really need the censorship? Aren't we mature and sensible enough to decide ourselves? Is the decision of a group of people to be followed by everyone? Doesn't censoring a book lead to more circulation? I intend to take some prominent writers and their controversial writings like Chughtai's and Manto's short stories and shall be deliberating upon the reasons for the censorship of these books and the writers. I shall be focusing upon the requirement of censorship with an emphasis on the statement made by a well known critic James Boswell, "For the worst thing you can do to an author is to be silent as to his works" ( *Life of Johnson*).

The banning of books has its origins as far back as 450 B.C., when Anaxagoras wrote that he thought the sun was a "white hot stone and that the moon reflected the sun's rays." (<http://libguides.mcnyc.edu>). His writings were deemed "derogatory" to the gods, forcing his departure from Athens and the burning of all of his writings. Since that time, decisions about books banning often have turned on the definition of what is derogatory. As society has grown

and changed, so have its tastes, and the fine line between what one person considers art and what another considers rubbish has shifted several times.

The book censorship in U.S. history began in 1873 when Anthony Comstock founded his New York Society for the Suppression of Vice. The main objective of the society was to prevent "obscene" materials from polluting the minds of the American people, especially the youth. In the beginning, the group targeted mostly erotic and crime stories. Comstock advocated boycotts of businesses that sold dime novels, as he claimed that the devil used such novels to entice children to a life of crime and lust and he lobbied state and local governments to pass laws to limit or prohibit the sale of such materials. His efforts led to bans or suppression of dime novels in Massachusetts, California, Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Washington.

In the years following the campaign of Anthony Comstock, implementing outright bans on books and materials has proved to be more difficult. Communities as well the courts have tried to balance personal preferences with intellectual freedom. More than a century after the Comstock era, the Supreme Court ruled in *Board of Education, Island Trees v. Pico* that public school boards could not remove a book from the library "simply because they dislike[d] the ideas contained in those books." (<https://www.uakron.edu/dotAsset/c262d97f-ff7a-478f-a137-7ec428346d81.pdf>).

In the decade 1990 and 2000, individuals raised 6,364 challenges to books, according to data from the Office for Intellectual Freedom. The greatest number of complaints arose from "sexually explicit" material (1,607). The second largest category consisted of "offensive language" (1,427). Other objections were prompted by: material that was not age appropriate, books having an occult theme, materials containing violence, books promoting homosexuality, items promoting a religious viewpoint, or books containing nudity. Many people would think the time of book burning is long past. However, in August 2003 a group burned the *Harry Potter Series* in Greenville, Michigan. As long as ideas and ideals continue to conflict, there likely will be individuals willing to put a book under lock and key or to eliminate it entirely in order to protect their beliefs. The delicate task of school boards, librarians and teachers is to strike a balance between personal values and intellectual freedoms, so that information is not thrust on those who do not wish to receive it

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while access is preserved for those who want it. A controversial or banned book must be analyzed by revisiting the age/period in which it was written. This shall provide us more insight into the reasons for declaring a book as objectionable and on writer's perspective for choosing to pick the controversial issue.

Many of the books that we consider rather "tame" today were once hotly debated works of literature. Then, of course, books that were once popular bestsellers are sometimes challenged or banned in classrooms or libraries because the cultural view point and/or language that was accepted at the time of the books publication is no longer deemed appropriate to read. Time has a way of changing our perspective on literature. From the beginning of the written word, books have had the capacity to enlighten, to instruct, to entertain and to offend, sometimes all within the same text.

Chughtai's 'Lihaf' is a story from the perspective of a young girl. This girl has been left by her mother at Begum Jaan's house as she is leaving for Agra for some work. Begum Jaan the protagonist of Lihaf married a rich Nawab who had a great reputation in society. Begum Jaan is very beautiful, young, white skin and well figured lady. As a newly wedded wife, she had sexual desires which she wanted to satisfy with her husband Nawab Sahab. Though she tried to seduce him in different ways but nothing happened. Nawab had a "mysterious hobby" who desired to "have students around him, young, fair-faced boys with slim waists". "After marrying Begum Jaan, he deposited her in the house with all his other possessions and promptly forgot about her." Then Rabbu a household servant enters in Begum Jaan's life. A young woman in need of sexual pleasures when devoid of it by her husband turns towards Rabbu. A secret relationship develops between Rabbu and Begum Jaan which at that time could not be even thought of.

Ishmat Chughtai talks of both lesbian and gay relationship in her story. In the Indian patriarchal society to imagine and address these relationships was commendable and at the same time considered objectionable. Chughtai was far ahead of her times and radical in her outlook. She strongly rejects the hypocrisy of Indian society which is unsupportive of women and fails to safeguard her interest. At the time of Lihaaf's publication in 1942, homosexuality in itself was a highly tabooed subject and punishable offence despite its prevalence in Indian mythology. Chughtai herself claimed that she did not know about

lesbianism while writing the story: "When I wrote Lihaaf, this thing [lesbianism] was not discussed openly. We girls used to talk about it and we knew there was something like it, but we didn't know the whole truth...". (<http://www.dailyo.in/arts/partition-1947-saadat-hasan-manto-thanda-gosht-ismat-chughtai-lihaaf-feminism/story/1>). The fact that Chughtai herself was not adequately aware of lesbianism as a concept or movement underscores the genuine ignorance of the narrator in Lihaaf.

Another writer who has often been criticized and ridiculed for being controversial was Saadat Hasan Manto. Manto was an Indian Urdu short story writer who migrated to Pakistan in 1948, after the partition of India. Merging psychoanalysis with human conduct, he was possibly one of the unsurpassed short story tellers of the 20th century, and one of the most controversial as well. Unfortunately, the tragedy with Manto was that having spent life on both sides of the border he was portrayed as an Indian writer in Pakistan. Bequeathed with a literary brilliance proficient of exploring topics as assorted as the socio-economic prejudice prevailing in the subcontinent, love, sex, prostitution, and the archetypal two-facedness of traditional subcontinental men, Manto is primarily remembered as the literary proponent of the Partition and its associated horrors.

Manto was an iconoclast and a rebel in the literary field right from the beginning. Though his earlier works, influenced by the progressive writers of his times showed marked leftist and socialist leanings, his later works increasingly became a stark in portraying the obscurity of human psyche, as humanist values progressively declined around the Partition. So much so that his own final works that came out in the bleak social atmosphere and his own financial fight backs reflected an intrinsic sense of human impotency in the direction of gloominess that prevailed in the larger society, cultivating in satire. Manto was never straight-forward in expressing his views and ideas. He touched almost every literary genre but was cognizant to give a roundabout and circumlocutory indication of his thoughts. He loved to formulate new means of doing things in his eccentric compartment. In that sense Manto could be called as an epitome of defiant and insubordinate perception. The finest case in point of his rebellious nature and been his resolution to make psychology and sex-related psychology the issue of his latter short stories.

Unlike his fellow luminaries, he neither indulged in didacticism nor romanticized his characters, nor offered any judgment on his characters. This allows his works to be interpreted in myriad ways, depending on the viewpoint of the reader. They would appear sensationalist or prurient to one, while exceeding human to another. His motive for choosing such a theme was just to revolt against the people who took such stories hollow and obscene. A closer analysis of his subjects makes explicit this fundamental facet of his view-point:

Manto has time and again been compared with D.H. Lawrence, and like Lawrence he also wrote about issues considered social taboos in Indo-Pakistani society such as social and economic discrimination gripping the pre- and post-colonial epoch as well as the distinctive double standards of a traditional male. In dealing with such topics, he did not take any pains to cover up factual state of the matter, although his short stories are over and over again intricately structured, with dramatic satire and a fine sense of humor. Characters are not defined solely by the manner they look, but by what they have done in their lives. Places are not described as an assorted of sensory interpretation but as settings for events, distressing poignant, blissful or otherwise.

The fact is that Manto was by no means contented and satisfied with whatever he wrote and accomplished. He could never materialize the dreams and aspirations he had always desired and aspirations he had always desired to get done. He remained disgruntled and discontented throughout his life. He had for all time wished to pull off something exceptional and incomparable. But unable to do so, he would revolt and bicker with everyone to give vent to his frustration and predicament. The upshot was that he had to recompense for his odious and offensive attitude. But that was something people never comprehended. Manto had an obsession to conquer something incredible. And whenever he found himself in the tight corners he would strive to hit upon a break away from his frustration by searching a new area of experiments. Manto's helplessness started tarnishing his spirit and scruples which added to his psychological perplexity and puzzlement. To add to it, his numerous court cases and societal reproaches deepened his pessimistic view of society, from which he felt ever so isolated. His inner blizzard could be effortlessly understood through a reassess of his letter to his friend Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi: "I am feeling a strange burden on my soul and I know there are countless reasons behind this restlessness

and depression of mine. There is nothing which could satisfy me as everything appears to be incomplete. Even my soul proves no consolation for this angst. I feel the dearth of everything within myself and feel that I should not be whatever I am. I should have been something else and not what I am today." (Premi:7)

Manto could not stick in the least to one ideology for long. He labored under a superiority complex that made him only one of its kind sort of egoist person. His works demonstrate the direction of his sense of self. It was his ego which kept him aloof from any political ideology, though in his early years he clearly seemed to be a revolutionist. His concern in politics also died down when he saw the bona-fide intentions and motives of politicians. He did not have a very first-rate opinion of the politicians of his times. Manto once mentioned in an article that he had no interest in politics. To him politicians and druggists were same as both politicians and druggists apply the prescriptions and examples of others. Here, again his burly ego won him bitter foes. Even those who recognized his genius, used to disparage him. Despite his ego, he was humane and unlike his contemporaries overtly called a spade a spade. He himself says, "If you are not acquainted with the times that are passing, read my short stories. If you find my short stories difficult to tolerate and digest, it clearly shows that the times are intolerably cruel." (Black Margins, 7) Manto had an innate feeling of hatred for such gutless individuals. But at the same time, he had candidly confessed his hatred and anguish for some of his near and dear ones. Manto married Safia, who was also of Kashmiri descent, living in Lahore, during his mother's lifetime in the year 1939. It was an arranged marriage pressed forward by his mother. Their married life lasted only for sixteen years for the duration of which Safia gave to a son and three daughters.

In the principal evacuation in recorded history, amid millions of refugees who migrated crosswise the brand new-fangled border after India was partitioned in 1947, Manto too, in the January of 1948, left Bombay behind to Lahore, Pakistan. At the moment of his going away from India, Manto was working for the well-known Bombay Talkies. In Bombay he had spent his happiest, monetarily well-off, and most ingenious and resourceful part of his life and he perpetually regretted leaving the city. The new Pakistan dashed his expectations. It was the time when Manto was fully taken over by alcohol. Often reviled and

misunderstood, Manto died of liver cirrhosis in 1955, at the age of 43, a broken man.

He was charged with obscenity several times for his short-stories like 'Dhuan,' 'Bu,' and 'Kali Shalwar', 'Khol Do,' 'Thanda Gosht,' and 'Upar Neeche Darmiyaan'. Manto had a unique sight to look through the world and relentlessly challenge the hypocrisy and façade morality of civilized society. Out of this defiant streak, and fuelled by the burning restlessness of his imagination, he produced a great body of work that continues to challenge self-righteousness and demands attention.

Manto has been eulogized for his iconoclastic vision and lack of sectarianism, his empathy for the unprotected and contempt for the deceitful, and principally in his stories on communal insurgence and Partition, for the striking manner in which he showed the doom of the weak and the viciousness of the victimizers. The milieu of his time, during his career from the mid-1930's to mid-50's, was said to have been scandalized by the focus on low life in a number of his stories, and this too appears to have added to his reputation. Most of his stories are set in Punjab, the author's birth place, in the rural areas or in the city, with the fight back for independence or communal disturbances in the background. Others were set among the toughs, prostitutes, pimps etc. mainly in Bombay, during Partition. Some of these accounts were written as if drawn straight from Manto's own life, with the author coming into view in them, and some were written in third person. Till other works were set in diverse settings during or just after Partition, showing the bedlam and disaster and disaster of the event.

Thus, more than a story writer, Manto appears to be a social activist. A work like that of Manto's which is more or less social criticism, essentially needs a sociological critical analysis. The sociological approach treats a work of art as the product of man living in a concrete society. The sociological method rests upon the conviction that art's relation to society is important. A work of art's relation to society is important. A work of art is not created in a vacuum: it is the work of an author fixed in time and space, answering to a community of which he is an important and articulate member. The emphasis is laid on understanding the social milieu and the extent to which, and the manner in which, the artist responds to it.

However both the writers were charged with obscenity because they had the courage to address the issues which were dormant, not to be discussed or uttered in the patriarchal society. These issues were hidden and repressed in the society and highlighted the hypocrisy of people. The writers were literary artists and not 'pornographers' who through their stories expressed the darker corners of human's psyche.

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## Gender and the Cityscape : Re-negotiating Space in Patricia McCormick's *Sold* and Madhur Bhandarkar's *Chandni Bar*

Dr.Rimika Singhvi\*

*The discussion on the problems faced by either gender often confines itself to the precincts of the comfortable space of the drawing room. The problems of the street are often hushed up under the carpet and rarely brought to light. This applies to the plight of sex-workers and dance bar girls across the world. The dependency on an illegitimate profession along with the stigma associated with it makes it a troubling situation, even when the bodily risks are not taken into account. Their 'workplace' - the red light area - is one where the rules and etiquettes of the society at daytime do not apply. The experience of these women is unique as well, torn as they are between their needs and pressures of the vicious system of which they are a part and the desire to break free from the physical and mental exploitation they face living out the anxieties of a gendered existence.*

It is against this background that the paper proposes to make a cross-generic study by analyzing Patricia McCormick's *Sold* (2008) and Madhur Bhandarkar's award-winning film *Chandni Bar* (2001) to explore the mental and physical worlds of these women, as they encounter the dark areas of the city which is their 'home'. While *Sold* explores the perspective of a thirteen year old Nepalese girl called Lakshmi who is sold into prostitution to a wealthy family in Delhi, *Chandni Bar* depicts the plight of Mumtaz who is forced to work at a dance bar and to eventually sell her body for a living. Both the works examine the women's lives in terms of the way in which they possess their surroundings and how the surroundings possess them. Their profession makes their lives very public and yet private; easily available to those who can afford it and yet hidden from plain sight. Their possession of the city is a story which depicts the other side of the gender debate, especially the 'woman question'.

The paper will thus focus on a section of women's presence in an urban space (viz. brothels in red light areas and dance bars) by drawing on feminist discourse around 'difference' and cultural geography that explores the public space as a gendered and sexualized arena. The

attempt will be to examine the fact that although there is an obvious plurality of meanings attached to sex-work and a plurality of sites where this takes place - thus providing evidence of the fragmentation of women's experiences - there remains a combination of structural factors that have varying influences on women's right to live and work in an urban context. In short, the paper will open up the complexities of space, not merely in the recognition of 'new' lifestyles but also as a site for the maintenance and reproduction of complex power relations; in this instance, primarily those of gender.

"It is in their honour that this book was written" is Patricia McCormick's statement at the end of her book *Sold* (2006). Using an almost poetic and rhythmic idiom, she pieces together the life of a Nepalese girl, Lakshmi and traces her journey from an obscure village in Nepal to the brothels in Calcutta where she is sold. Each of the chapters is a vignette which presents a different aspect of the lives of women, and later the lives of the sex-workers. Right from the "tiny glass sun": a bulb, the obsession with a "tin roof" and later the "palm frond" which is an electric fan, the story follows the perceptions of a thirteen year old village girl who is sensitive and has high values and morals.

Lakshmi's troubles start when she is disturbed by "the way he looks at me", referring to her step-father who thinks that "a girl is like a goat ... not worth crying over when it's time to make a stew." He sells off her precious cucumbers, the ones she had given names to and thus humanised, and it is clear that he will dehumanize her similarly, once she is of an appropriate age and when he needs money. The pathos of the village life, especially as experienced by a woman, is apparent when Lakshmi says, "we mark time by women's work and women's woes." The short scenes of happiness are superseded by the heavy monsoon which ravages their fields. They lose all that they have, and so he sells off Lakshmi for eight hundred rupees.

The 2001 film entitled *Chandni Bar* too follows the story of another village girl from Uttar Pradesh - Mumtaz - who comes to Mumbai with her uncle after her village is destroyed in a riot. She also has high values and morals instilled in her as part of her rural upbringing, but goes on to accept her fate with stoicism and a resolve to ensure a better future for her children. There is continuous lamenting (crying and mourning) in the background which reiterates throughout the movie,

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and is heart-rending. Mumtaz's uncle gets her to take up a job as a dance bar girl on the insistence and subtle threat from Iqbal, a man who promises them a roof and a square meal a day in Mumbai. She is viewed as a commodity by Iqbal and Anna, who runs a dance bar, as her uncle answers on her behalf and forces his consent on her with the promise of getting a job himself once their situation stabilises. But Mumtaz can only hear herself cry, even through the loud music of the bar.

The symbol of money is recurrent in both the works, especially when Lakshmi, now a prostitute for many months, thinks: "Thirty Rupees. That is the price of a Coca-Cola at Bajai Sita's store. That is what he paid for me" and Mumtaz works endlessly at the dance bar for the sake of her children. They try to escape out of their situations but miss out on the "city calculations". This not only keeps them trapped in the vicious cycle of sellers and buyers, but also keeps them subservient to the men who 'own' them. They believe it is only a fair price for being the pimp that they should have total control over these women's earnings.

The city life is presented as a gendered and sexualized arena which has a combination of structural factors to keep the women in check. Lakshmi witnesses this structural power early on, when she sees a shaven girl being publicly humiliated for trying to run away from a brothel. The punishments that the brothel-owner flings upon them, right from beating them with a leather strap to starving them or harming their private parts, form part of the instrument of power that is used on these women. Even the brothel-owner - a woman - is slapped by a male customer for lying about Lakshmi's actual age, who in turn bears the brunt of the slap.

The structure of the brothel speaks of the power equations that money governs: the "new girl" gets a room all to herself as she is a virgin and in which she is kept locked. Once the deception can no longer be pulled off that she is "pure", she is shifted to a common room where the customers are attended to by pulling a curtain around the bed. Mumtaz too is demoted from being the central attraction of the dance bar to being a waitress once she grows old. It clearly demonstrates how the physical appeal of a woman is connected to her monetary value. Her daughter fetches a large amount of money to rescue her brother from the police, as she is young and a virgin when she too decides to work at a bar and sell herself off.

Apart from the monetary structures, the city is offensive to the rural sensibilities of both the girls. When Lakshmi reaches the city for the first time, she observes, "Soon the road is all madness and noise. This must be the city." The characteristic of excessive noise and chaos maybe a routine feature for the urban dwellers but for a girl with a clear mind, the city is as chaotic and confusing as it can be. Mumtaz too finds herself amidst crows, tin shed roofs, bare brick walls, congested spaces with one too many people around and narrow alleyways that led to the darkness of their house, upon her arrival in the city. The crowds of men in the public spaces disturb their senses, as they are appraised as a sex object by each one of them. Neither of them spots any other woman, besides themselves who is outside their household, loitering around as the men do. The only men they are in contact with are either their owners or goons and servants. They are soon "lost", with Lakshmi not being able to "see the swallow-tailed peak" to remind her to get back home once she had earned enough and Mumtaz realizing that she was trapped into dancing at the bar for the rest of her life. This feeling of being lost is a fallout of their being mired in the big, bad city and the eventual casting off of their rural sensibilities and morals, as they forcibly trade their modesty to bring in the money required for survival.

Projecting oneself as sexy is a major lesson that both of them learn from the others around them once they start working. Heavy eyeliner which makes for "tiger eyes", eye catching red lipstick and see-through clothes for a loud effect are a part of their dressing routine as they prepare to sell themselves. The "shawl" which covers the head and upper body, and is seen as a symbol of respectability in the Indian culture, is discarded or flaunted lewdly by both the protagonists. Clothes are a conscious choice for them, and a symbol of their servitude to the fantasy of and the oppression by men.

Pretension is another aspect of their lives, which both of them fail to grasp at first. They are bewildered by the movie posters that adorn their surroundings. In Lakshmi's case, there is also a television at the brothel and in Mumtaz's, the poster of a femme fatale pointing a gun is up on one of the walls. Their reality is so removed from what they see portrayed on the screen/ wall that they feel completely cut off from the "world full of brides and marigolds, rain machines and white horses" which is, in fact, their distance from humanity and kindness.

Yet they create a liveable space in which they survive day after day, if not night after night. The given space of the dismal brothel is created into a place which lets them maintain their sanity even as they are on the verge of despair.

The women in the brothel and at the dance bar are bold and sometimes cynical. The underlying similarity between them is that they have accepted their fate and try to put up with all the injustice that is perpetrated on them. All of them are helpless, as is highlighted by the case of the sick sex-worker, Pushpa, who is thrown on the street with her two young children when she can no longer work and by Deepa, who longs for a child but suffers miscarriages as she is forced into sex work by her own husband even when he knows that she is pregnant. They have lost control over their bodies and desires and cannot offer protection even to their own children, born or unborn. But they try to get by with a false sense of power that they earn using men's weakness for women, all the while realising that they are still the ones being exploited. They have strong rivalries for customers as well, as they stoop to stealing customers from each other to make sure that they earn the most. Thus the harsh environment of the city ensures that these women regress emotionally, and one also sees how the progressive dream of a city life turns into a nightmare for most.

Pushpa's young son faces ostracism at school, which is brought to light when the young footballer has a group of senior boys calling his mother a "whore". Still, she and the others like her have accepted this label as part of their lives, and despite being the ones who bring in money, remain the ones without any financial or social security or respect. They are abused by the brothel-owner and the goons who keep them confined and also by their dis-satisfied customers. When Pushpa is thrown out because she refuses to sell off her infant daughter to the brothel-owner, Lakshmi observes that her (Pushpa's) son will now have to break his body while crushing stones to earn a livelihood. The business of flesh is such that there is rampant objectification and a young, nubile, virgin girl-child can be made to command a hefty price even before she can realise that she's being inadvertently pushed into a hell-hole.

Lakshmi and Pushpa form a strong bond with the others at their workplace, a bond which is formed by sharing the same sorrows. They share the same bond with the male servants too who are in the same position as these poor girls, being on the margins of the society.

These male servants are often looked down upon as females just because their job is to serve others and the feminine 'virtue' of being submissive and helpless towards the dominant male rubs off on them. The tea-seller, for instance, offers them tea free of charge and is beaten brutally by the shopkeeper for doing so. Pasha, in Mumtaz's case, offers help in caring for her children, and is shown crying when he sees Mumtaz's daughter dancing in the bar for money. It is not only the girls but the entire class on the lowest rung of the society which is rendered helpless and powerless by the structural constraints of society. These men also help the women by connecting them to the outside world other than the routine dealings with the pimps and the customers. Lakshmi knows that the tea-seller goes around the city and so maintains a strong bond with him and Potty helps Mumtaz create a happy married life, at least for a little while. Feminists explore precisely this "exclusionary process by which individuals or groups create, produce and represent landscape to legitimize gendered ideologies.... The cityscape is thus seen as "spatially and symbolically gendered and sexed" (Hayden 1995 as quoted in Till 1999: 148). They further argue that the gendered notions of private/ public spaces in the built environment result in a kind of landscape-based activism that can empower the marginalized by transforming the 'given' material landscapes to 'make' their perspectives and voices materially visible.

While Mumtaz considers living on her own after she is sexually assaulted by the uncle who is supposed to protect her, she is warned by the other girls that it is too dangerous and that the world outside will exploit her even more like vultures on a carcass. Lakshmi too does not have a way out, especially when she learns that even the policemen are hand-in-glove with the brothel-owner, and cynically reflects: "I don't understand this city. It is full of so many bad people, even people who are supposed to be good". This is the crucial point where both of them lose hope for redemption and submit to their fate to continue being treated as an object, as a commodity which will be used and re-used till it reaches its expiry date.

The presence of the police, ironically, is a major deterrent for both the women and all those in the flesh trade. While the police-raid in Sold is just an excuse for picking up a prostitute by the policemen, the one in Chandni Bar is a medium for the policemen to extort money from the brothel-owner. While the policemen who raid the brothel are all male

officers, the raid on the bar includes female officers as well but who are mere puppets in the hands of their male superiors. The bar girls at least preserve their right to be arrested and held in custody by a female officer, sex workers are illegally taken away. It also implies that even the females on public duty and in a public space cannot offer protection, legal or otherwise, to the fellow occupants of another 'public' space. It is ironic that in both the cases, the ones supposed to protect are the ones who exploit and which is true for both the girls in relation to their families too. Mumtaz faces a lot of trouble from the police and which proves to be the undoing of her life and of her efforts to save her children from the world she and her husband lived in. Not only does she lose her son because of the assault that he faced at the juvenile centre, but she also loses her daughter to the dance bar as well.

There are moments of ordinary experiences of joy and happiness amidst the sordid gloom of their lives as one of the girls with Lakshmi is shown to be "the one with tricks to make men pay extra". Mumtaz and the other girls go sight-seeing for a day in Mumbai, spending time on the large open beaches and on the Marine Drive where they discuss movies just as any normal group of young people would do. At the brothel, the children of the workers pretend a normal life as well, going to school and playing on the roof until the men have gone away at night. Mumtaz takes care of her children in a similar way, keeping her daughter in the green room and attending to her between the dancing and the collection of money. These women have a resonant thought that "in the evening, it is harder to pretend" but they have no choice but to continue with it anyway. Lakshmi is horrified when she realises that she cannot seem to "rinse the men from my body", which is reminiscent of the poem entitled "Preludes" by T.S. Eliot in which the speaker is reminded of "the thousand sordid images/ of which your soul was constituted" and of the "sparrows in the gutters".

Mumtaz's life seems to change when a regular customer to the bar and gangster, Potty, gives in to his masculinity upon hearing her story and marries her. But, his position on marriage is that he has given her the legal status of a wife by marrying her and carries on with his life at the bars and with other girls. He is later killed in a fake encounter by the police and as Mumtaz is not accepted by Potty's superiors as his representative, stigmatized as she is by her identity as a former dance bar girl, she has to get back to working at the bar again. Monica,

a sex-worker with Lakshmi, had hoped that her family "will thank us and honour us" because all that she earns goes for the upkeep of her young daughter and towards paying the medical bills of the family. But, she faces a rude shock when after the family comes to know that she is a prostitute, they break all ties with her and she loses sustenance from the brothel as well, having being diagnosed with "the virus".

Sex education is practically non-existent in the lives of these women, who are exposed to bodily risks and are in great need of awareness. The sex education that Lakshmi gets from her mother when she starts menstruating is: "If he turns to you in the night, you must give yourself to him in the hope you will bear him a son." And, later, another piece of information is added to this half-baked knowledge that there is no cure for "the virus", which they try to stay protected from by using condoms that the government official provides them through the back door. The men often refuse to use condoms and Lakshmi is explicitly warned by the other girls not to insist upon its use for if the customer complains, there will be dire consequences for her. Not only do the men expose their own bodies to diseases, they assume their prerogative to deny protection to the prostitutes as well. It is once again ironical that the girls who are in the flesh trade have no sex education.

The mirror works as a symbol in the lives of Mumtaz and Lakshmi, especially as they are bought and sold at face value, and have to dress up accordingly. It also symbolises how they view themselves and their situation, which is shown by Lakshmi's reflections in front of a mirror: "Sometimes I see a girl who is growing into womanhood. Other days, I see a girl growing old before her time." She also meets an American activist who offers her hope for a better future while asking her if she is being held there against her will. All that she can think of is: "My will? That is something I lost long ago". However, she is changed from that moment on and awaits the time when she is finally rescued.

The two women come from rural spaces in which they were loved and cared for. This memory is even more accentuated in the case of Lakshmi whose life prior to being sold is contrasted to the "madness" of the city. This transfer from the moral rural background to the cold and indifferent city also marks their transformation from being innocent to being experienced. William Blake's "London" emphasises this very moment when the speaker notes, "How the youthful harlot's curse/ Blasts the new-born infant's tear/ And blights with plague the Marriage

hearse". It is unfortunate in the case of Mumtaz whose own marriage fails to support her. But Payal, Mumtaz's daughter, and Lakshmi embody Blake's "youthful harlot", who is exploited and cannot help but curse the institution that pushes those like her into such a vulnerable position.

The paper thus looks at a particular space (brothel/ dance bar) by viewing it as a static immobile place of oppression and also attempting to examine that space as a dynamic site of re-evaluation and mediation of power-relationships. A study of such gendered spaces, therefore, needs to be informed by feminist critiques of the material environment that focus on discussions of space and place. More importantly, an understanding of the relationship between public and private space ought to be made critical to establishing an interdisciplinary language located at the intersection of gender and space. Feminist scholarship has actively engaged in the analysis of such spatial units as the body, (public and private) space, place and the homefront. But, the way forward now is to direct attention to the examination of the cityscape and the built environment (locations and perspectives) as a system of power relations for it is now emerging as vital to the production of gendered identities that are re-negotiating 'space'.

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## Dalit Representation and Reality in Omprakash Valmiki's *Joothan*

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Dalit literature has been a prominent feature of contemporary Indian fiction. It has played a crucial role to rewrite the 'history from below.' The appalling plight arising out of caste prejudice and discrimination abound in Dalit stories. While writers like Omprakash Valmiki, Sharan Kumar Limbale, Bama, Sivakami, Neerav Patel, etc. compelled national and international attention through their 'personal narratives,' many others like Basudev Sunani have taken up the onerous task of writing the cultural history of their people. The present paper brings out the vice of untouchability and oppression in our society through Valmiki's life narrative *Joothan*. The paper shows the narrator's transformation from a little lower caste boy reconciled to eating upper-class leftovers to the one who fights the scourge of untouchability. It attempts to discuss the ravages of Dalit existence and articulates a vision for Dalit future.

The word 'Dalit' is a descriptive word suggestive of bondage, agony and the anguished aspirations of a vast victimized section of Indian population right down the ages. It literally means 'crushed down.' Apparently it refers to caste binaries and caste based oppression. To quote, "'dalit' is a demographic identity of the socially oppressed untouchable caste groups" (Satyanarayan 78). Silenced by prejudice and oppression, Dalit literature provides critical insight on the question of their identity, the system of oppression in the social fabric of Indian society. The beginnings of Dalit literature are traced back to Ambedker's struggle for dalit emancipation in the early twentieth century. The real originality and force of Dalit writing can be traced to the decades following the late 1960s. The 'Dalit Panthers' Manifesto brings Ambedkar into the mainstream of public discourse. The establishment of Dalit Panthers in 1960's gave a boost to the voice of the most marginalized in the Indian society. Poets and fiction writers challenged the dominant literary discourse using Dr. Ambedkar's ideology about upper-caste's hegemony in India's social fabric.

Dalit literature is neither a pleasure giving literature of fine sentiments and refined gestures, nor a wallowing of self pity. In fact, it is a literature of commitment. By bringing points of view, insights and

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directions growing out of their own experience and aspirations, Dalit literature encompasses intellectual and creative work by those who, as untouchables, have been victims of economic, social and cultural identity. To quote Limbale, “By Dalit literature, I mean writing about Dalits by Dalit writers with a dalit consciousness. The form of Dalit literature is inherent in its Dalitness and its purpose is obvious: to inform Dalit society of its slavery, and narrate its pain and suffering to upper caste Hindus” (19). It now raises questions related to modernity, contemporary forms of caste, conversion, identity and discrimination. Roots of Dalit autobiography go to African-American autobiography as Dalit Panther Movement goes back to Black Panther Movement in America. The bitter experiences of two sides are in terms of race and caste in the respective countries. Again and again, both critics as well as Dalit writers themselves describe Dalit autobiographies as ‘narratives of pain.’ It is the pain which strings one narrative event to the next, and it is the pain that binds individual Dalits together into an ‘imagined community’ of fellow sufferers. This prose fictional genre involves “the journey of the protagonist from childhood to maturity, encountering in the process many hurdles and setbacks amidst an often intractable social ethos” (Ganguly 148). A call for change and assertion of self-respect appear to be emerging from these narratives through persistent and all-pervading struggle to vanquish indignity and oppression. By focusing on the ‘factual’ recounting of experiences, these narratives try to attack the basis of this caste discrimination in a variety of ways. Dalit autobiographies are meant to be understood as a representative life story, where the ‘ordinary’ or ‘representative’ Dalit individual uses his narrative to raise his voice for those who are silenced by caste oppression. In the autobiographical form, these ‘facts’ become uncontested truth, as only an individual can depict his life experiences in the best possible way. The autobiography serves the function of re-affirming and strengthening the link between the individual Dalit writer and the larger Dalit community. Moreover, autobiography provides a space for Dalit writers to regain control over the constitution and meaning of Dalit selfhood and join in a show of strength with the larger ‘Dalit community.’

Valmiki’s autobiographical work, *Joothan* describes the trauma and suffering of being a Dalit. First published in Hindi in 1997 and translated into English by ArunPrabha Mukherjee in 2003, *Joothan* “created a stir in the Hindi speaking intelligentsia of India” (Dahiya 17).

It portrays the situation of the most oppressed of the dalits, the caste group that performs the most menial of all tasks: the removal of human waste or garbage in the village or urban economy and is bound to accept the ‘leftover’ of the upper-class community. The word encapsulates the pain, humiliation, and poverty of this community, which has lived at the bottom of social pyramid for centuries. The name Valmiki is derived from the creator of the *Ramayana*. The choice of name suggests a wish to be associated with a figure who confers a sense of self-respect and the possibility of a better future; or perhaps to remind upper castes that their most famous work was written by a ‘dalit.’ The symbolic shift, however, did not see their conditions improve even after independence. Even as ‘Balmikis’ they continued to languish at the bottom of the caste hierarchy. Their condition was especially abysmal in villages where they were forced to live in filthy enclaves segregated from upper-caste quarters.

Born and brought up as a Dalit, Valmiki wielded the power of pen to give voice to the marginalized section of society—the Dalits. *Joothan* is a memoir of growing up ‘untouchable’ outside a typical village in Uttar Pradesh. The author says, “Dalit life is excruciatingly painful, charred by experiences. Experiences that did not manage to find room in literary creation. We have grown up in a social order that is extremely cruel and inhuman. And compassionless towards Dalits” (Valmiki vii). Valmiki expresses the torments he had to undergo while writing his life history: “I had to relive all those memories, torments, neglects, admonitions. I suffered a deep mental anguish while writing this book. How terribly painful was this unraveling of me, layer upon layer” (vii). He portrays a village life where the members of his caste not only lived outside the village but were also forced to perform ordained jobs like sweeping the roads, cleaning the cattle barns, disposing the dead animals, working in the fields, and other physical labour for upper caste people including the Tyagi Brahmins. They were often paid nothing and denied basic requirements like access to public land, water, education etc. One is reminded of Ambedkar’s speeches posing harsh question to society. “I asked them (our Hindu friends), ‘you take the milk from cows and buffaloes and when they are dead you expect us to remove the dead bodies. Why? If you carry the dead bodies of your mothers to cremate, why do you not carry the dead bodies of your ‘mother-cows’ yourself?’” (Ambedkar 143). Omprakash Valmiki’s *Joothan*

vividly depicts the angst of the Dalit community against age old pervasiveness of caste discrimination and suppression in our society.

The writer recounts his childhood experiences, his dream to read in school like other children, his desire to be treated as human. He recollects how he fell on 'terrible times' in school as he was humiliated and beaten almost daily by 'Muslim Tyagis' as well as 'the Hindu Tagas'. The author describes how his headmaster often ordered him to sweep the playground while the other children in his class studied. "Tears were falling from my eyes. From doors and windows of the schoolrooms, the eyes of the teachers and the boys saw this spectacle. Each pore of my body was submerged in an abyss of anguish" (5). Often he felt hurt and singled out. "There was our no-win situation. We were humiliated whichever way we dressed" (3). He had seen his parents dying each day in humiliation and neglect. He has painfully described the collecting, preserving and eating joothan. "The joothan was eaten with a lot of relish" (9) but at the same, shares his feelings of getting disturbed and 'nauseated' at this thought. "When I think about all those things today, thorns begin to prick my heart. What sort of a life was that? After working hard day and night, the price of our sweat was just joothan. And yet no one had any grudges. Or shame. Or repentance" (10). The author recollects how Chowdhriji scolded his mother for requesting him to put something on the pattal after the feast at his house: "You are taking a basket full of joothan. And on the top of that you want food for your children. Don't forget your place.... Pick up your basket and get going" (11). These words penetrated his breast like 'a knife' and continued to "sing" him "to this day." The shame of eating the leftovers as a child haunts him for the rest of his life. Facing discrimination and humiliation at different stages and forbearing pain, he grows up with bitter experiences and memories of childhood and yet with a resolve to change his life. A ray of hope is always shown by his father who says that "You have to improve the caste by studying" (29).

The whole narrative is a series of shameful incidents narrated by the author which he himself faced at different stages of life. He shares, "Only he whose skin has suffered the knife wounds ... can recognize the pain . . ." (127). He painfully narrates his experience of lynching the animal's skin. "My hands were trembling as I held the knife. . . . That day something broke inside me. I skinned the bullock under chacha's guidance. I felt I was drowning in a swamp. . . . The

wounds of the torment that I suffered with chacha on that hot afternoon are still fresh on my skin" (35). Although some incidents – one when he was appreciated by Chaman Lal Tyagi and was given a version of Ramcharitmanas on passing the High School exam – are also included, he shows that the general attitude was only of negation and insult. He is reminded of a Dhobi's reply when he went to get his clothes ironed: "If we iron your clothes, then the Tagas won't get their clothes washed by us. We will lose our roti" (17). The author reveals how revealing his identity not only brought a disgusting response from others but also made him realize that he was nothing, he was inferior, that even education for him was not entirely a process of freedom and awakening. The author says, "As long as people don't know that you are a Dalit, things are fine. The moment they find out your caste, everything changes. The whispers slash your veins like knives. Poverty, illiteracy, broken lives, the pain of standing outside the door, how would the civilized Savarna Hindu know it?" (134).

The book illustrates how people from his caste, even after getting education, faced a terrible crisis - the crisis of identity. Some would use their family gotra as surname in order to join the mainstream of society. There was a fear lurking in the dark recesses of their hearts that prevented them from leading normal lives. Even his wife Chanda and niece Seema objected to using the surname 'Valmiki' as it symbolised social stigma. "The stings this surname has made me endure are hard to describe" (129). He read avidly – Dr. Ambedkar, Sarat Chandra, Premchand, Hemingway, Dostoyevsky, Rabindranath Tagore, Kalidas, Bhagwatgita and many more. Though this helped him broadening his outlook yet he could not find an answer to the caste based discrimination in society. "The deep-rooted caste system of Indian society never allowed him to create his own space amongst the members of the privileged classes. Several times he dares speak breaking the myth of 'silence' but his voice was either listened lightly or not listened at all" (Agarwal 25). He describes how due to caste based hatred, countless stings stung 'not just his body but also his heart' (132). He painfully asserts that his father did not know that castes are not improved with education; rather these are improved only by birth in our society. The voice of the author, thus, speaks for many who have been discriminated against and being barred from the mainstream.

*Joothan* unmask the lies and falsehoods of the social order and insists one to confront his caste comfort and caste privilege. It exposes the duality of system, the double standards of the upper-class people who, under the cover of darkness, do all the things which they strongly condemn during daylight. It vehemently deals with the touching issues of untouchability, discrimination, social segregation, poverty questioning the very rational society which perpetrates such crimes against humanity. Several questions at the end compel us to think over issues related to a section of society. 'Why Savarnas hate Dalits and Shudras so much?' 'Why is my caste my only identity?' By making his personal experiences the basis of writing, the author has tried to portray the anguish of thousands of people, experienced for over thousands of years. It should be read as an appeal to resist discriminatory attitude of society. The book shows that God did not ordain the slavery of Dalits. Human beings created it. Therefore, rejection and revolt birthed from the womb of Dalits' pain.

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## Postcolonial Reconstruction of the Ambivalent Diasporic Space : An Assessment

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*It is for those who have suffered the sentence of history subjugation, domination; diaspora, displacement?that we learn our most enduring lessons. (Homi K. Bhabha in The Location of Culture)*

Diasporic experience reconfigures one's sense of 'being' entailing a sort of ambivalence. It results in the making of an existential sandwich whereby the subject is disseminated in the two worlds simultaneously. As a result, it shapes an ambivalent and oscillating condition for the subject leading to certain excruciating spheres of existence viz. cultural duality, rootlessness, fragmentation, a sense of exile (chosen or forced) and finally identity-crisis caused by the dialectics of dislocation and othering. It is in this context that the present paper attempts to reconstruct the paradigm of diasporic space from the standpoint of certain postcolonial conceptualizations/percepts.

The postcolonial ambivalent diasporic space is the site of a contest posing multifarious challenges for the migrant in the hostland. A worthy critic Nasta in her important book titled Home Truths: Fictions of the South Asian Diaspora in Britain makes a thought provoking observation by saying that "...the notion of home formed an integral part of the naturalized rhetoric of Britain as Empire and has lingered on in the nationalistic grammar of Britain as post-imperial nation" (1). In this sense, I intend to point out that the problematics of the homeland and the hostland camouflage much wider yet covert inferences coupled with oblique strategies of dominating and othering the migrant (the other). In this context, it is important to ponder upon the following percepts though in a circumscribed manner catering to the scope of the critique so as to place the argument of the critique in a broader framework:

### a. Identity

Consistently documented in cultural studies, theories of diaspora, and diasporic cultural productions is the salience of fluidity of identity. Stuart Hall, Homi Bhabha, Avtar Brah, Lawrence Grossberg, Floya

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Anthias, Judith Butler, Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak and many others have written extensively on how fluid diasporic identities pose a challenge to essentialist notions of fixed identity and monolithically constructed ethnic absolutism. Though there are wide differences between their positions, yet their formulations have the underpinnings of the notion of the subject as it is understood in post-structuralism and postmodernism. The term 'subject' denotes decentred view of 'self' and is hence preferred to the term 'self' and 'identity' which imply a view of the self as stable, whole, centered and autonomous. Since the positionality of the diasporic subject the liminal or in-between space problematizes the issue of identity as natural and/or identity as invention, the diasporic literary productions remain preoccupied with the idea of identity and identity formation as dynamic processes capable of both destabilizing ethnic absolutism and of strengthening ethnic ghettoization and enclavization.

In the context of the critique of the present paper, the concept of identity though "...an enigma, which by its very nature, defies a precise definition" (Brah 20) infuses the nuance of difference between the insider/native/self and the outsider/migrant/other at the interface of the dynamics of the de-essentialized cross-cultural fertilization in the hostland. Brah remarks: "Identities are inscribed through experiences culturally constructed in social relations" (123). Importantly, the Eurocentric colonial discourse has always defined the colonized in relation to it-self and that too in a peculiar way an opaque defining by way of imposing a sort of slanted fixity and bald rootedness aimed to domesticate the colonized. The sense of the exotic and the pervasive reliance on the metaphysical/mystical representation as opposed to the intellectual fertility and rationality of the colonizer are some of the characteristic ways of domesticating the colonized. The goal of such representation of the colonized is reductionist and discriminatory. Said, in his magnum opus work titled *Orientalism* explicates such reductionist agenda of the Occident by way of his close examination of the European colonial discourse refracting a systematic management or even production of "...the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and [even] imaginatively" (3). Said goes on to uncover such Eurocentric colonial discourse whereby the East/Orient is constructed as the mysterious, primitive/savage other as opposed to the Occidental claims to strength, and rational identity. Alternatively,

identity is also erected on the edifice of sameness as well. The contention is that it is not always through difference that we are able to make sense of our identity. Rather, there prevails a sense of deep comradeship and fraternity amongst millions of people. Said, in an interview with Salman Rushdie titled "On Palestinian Identity: A Conversation with Edward Said" furthers his stance on identity by saying that "...the whole notion of crossing over or moving from one identity to another, is extremely important to me, being as I am?as we all are, a sort of hybrid" (182). The focus on the 'as we all are' is repetitive of the sameness and makes a generalization about hybridity. He lays emphasis on this intermixing as a universal phenomenon as it helps in de-essentializing the notion of identity. Such a model of identity personifies a sort of resistance to the [ever-marginalizing] colonial tactic of perceiving the other in its difference solely. Hence, it shapes a counter-narrative against the colonial center. It is in this context that a noted Indian critic Singh in his essay titled "Expatriate Writing and the Problematic of Centre: Edward Said and Homi Bhabha" remarks that: "The colonial, imperial, totalizing or homogenizing is what Said's exile [migrant] aims at dismantling...through constructing a [new] identity" (23). The evolutionary inter-relationships envision a multilogue of inter-community mosaic. Hence, the migrant moves "...from hybridity to heteroglossia of the world" (Singh 24).

Homi Bhabha takes up the issue of such an identity which resists and reconstructs the center in its own way. Importantly, he is of the opinion that the notion of culture/nation is doubly inscribed in the sense of the theoretical-cum-historical composition of its origin and performative disruptive scraps/patches of the daily life. Hence, he conceives culture as a hybrid spectrum for the migrant. Accordingly, the encumbrance of this double inscription means to live on the edges/margins for which there is a typical Bhabhaesque term, i.e., liminality it literally means 'threshold'. The term refers to a transitory, in-between space, which is characterized by indeterminacy and hybridity coupled with the potential for perpetual destabilization and change. This way, the conception of culture/nation and its associated signs present a tension of differences between the corollaries of double inscription leading to the formation of a cultural incommensurability "...where differences cannot be subsumed or totalized because they somehow occupy the same space (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* 177). This

incommensurability reminds us of Rushdie's "broken mirrors" in the context of migrant's diasporic identity. Bhabha calls this state as "...the twilight existence of the aesthetic image" (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* 15) corroborating migrant's subjectivity by emphasizing on the interstitial layers of the diasporic identity. Such interstitial layers blast concentration on one signified and advocate perpetual erasures privileging the phenomenon of the in-between and interstitially. These "...in-between spaces provide the terrain of elaborating strategies of selfhood singular or communal that initiate new signs of identity" (Bhabha, *Location of Culture* 14). Such an understanding assigns the migrant's identity a multi-accented and discursive position in the diasporic space. The preceding discussion connects the problematics of difference & sameness of identity and consequent interstitially thereof, with the dualism of the hostland and the homeland for the migrant consciousness.

#### b. Hybridity

By now, the critique has adequately introduced that the migrant's engagement is quite intimate with the idea of hybridity in the diaspora space. However, the term necessitates certain amplification. McLeod comments: "Hybridity...[is] a way of thinking beyond exclusionary, fixed, binary notions of identity... Hybrid identities are never total and complete in themselves, instead they remain in perpetual motion, pursuing errant and unpredictable routes, open to change and reinscription" (219). In its most recent usage, hybridity refers to the meeting point of diaspora, unfolding cultural assortment and it is here that the migrant meets the host. Hybridity depicts a new self-fashioning, and thus is sensibly entangled with the concerns of the migrant's identity. Accordingly, the term hybridity stocks a range of cultural politics referencing the migrant's situatedness in the diaspora space. Importantly, the hybrid is a slippery concept signifying a meaningful contest to assert change. Having fluid boundaries, the term is extensively used in Diaspora studies by a number of theorists such as Paul Gilroy, Stuart Hall, Homi Bhabha etc. Gilroy employs the term in the domain of cultural production. In this regards, he interprets the musical components of hip hop as a hybrid form. Hall perceives hybridity as if altering British life. And Bhabha conceives hybridity as an 'in-between' phenomenon referring to his other concepts viz. 'third space', ambivalence and mimicry.

Further, hybridity is an important idea for the formation of identity. In Bhabha's conception "...hybridity is camouflage" (*Location of Culture* 193) and thus is an unruly yet creative category. It generates a newness mediating and reconstructing cultural differences. In the context of diaspora, hybridity refers to the process of cross-cultural fertilization and describes how a migrant embraces the varied facets of the hostland and reconfigures the same so as to hybridize his/her identity. Hybridity is understood as a process rather than a procedure/stable phenomenon. The term advocates syncretism and conjunction in comparison with the notion fixed identity. In this sense, hybridity is a key idea in the contemporary cultural criticism and post-colonial theory.

The idea of hybridity contests against the notions of pure identity and, culture/nation in the interest of the diasporic/the migrant in relation to the domain of cultural politics. An important corollary of this stance raises the need to measure up the degree to which hybridity impacts the notion of cultural/national purity. From the perspective of the colonized countries, the idea refutes the notions of order and rootedness. Rather, it builds polemical assimilation and adaptation of cultural practices so as to endorse the migrant's identity by subverting the monolithic structure(s) of the hostland. Hybridity means a sort of negotiation between the native and the migrant or the colonizer and the colonized. Loomba in her important book titled *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* explains Bhabha's conception of hybridity in the following manner: *Bhabha goes back to Fanon to suggest that liminality and hybridity are necessary attributes of the colonial condition. For Fanon, you will recall, psychic trauma results when the colonial subject realizes that he can never attain the whiteness he has been taught to desire, to shed the blackness that he has learnt to devalue. Bhabha amplifies this to suggest that colonial identities are always in flux and agony.* (148)

For Bhabha, this is a site for ambivalence between the colonizer and the colonized signifying the dynamics of resistance. This ambivalence installs the creeping sense of flux and agony in the colonized/migrant which acts as the creative stimulus for moving beyond the imaginary borders to own a hybridized and deterritorialized sense of one's being. In this sense, hybridity "...as 'raceless chaos' by contrast, produces no stable new form but rather something...restless, uneasy, interstitial hybridity: a radical heterogeneity, discontinuity, the permanent revolution of forms (Young 23-24). Thus, hybridity empowers the colonized/

diasporic subjects to negotiate the opposing attributes and ambiguities of existence. At the same time, it is also a subversive tool with them whereby they may contest the various forms of oppression and exclusion and may thus chutneyfy the pervasive/dominant discourses. For this reason, different hybridities viz. racial, linguistic, literary, cultural and religious may be creatively engaged by the colonized/migrant. Hence, it is important to observe that, in the context of the diaspora studies, the term has ample utility in terms of understanding new cross-cultural forms, highlighting the interdependence and mutual construction of the subjectivities of the native and the migrant.

#### c. **Ambivalence**

The term, in its most general sense, refers to a kind of continuous swing between desiring a particular thing and its opposite as well. In other words, it is a kind of continual and simultaneous attraction-repulsion paradigm governing the consciousness of an individual. Bhabha employs an adapted version of this idea so as to formulate his position in his colonial discourse theory. He conceives that there exists an ambivalent attraction-repulsion paradigm between the colonizer (native) and the colonized (migrant). It is an ambivalent paradigm since the colonized (migrant) never exhibits a simple, consistent and complete repulsion towards the colonizer (native). Rather, it is a relationship which exudes a lot of complexity in terms of the said paradigm. Importantly, the complicity and resistance on the part of the colonized (migrant) weave an ambivalent fluctuating position towards the colonizer (native). Accordingly, the colonial discourse being both exploitative and cultivating is a site which hosts such ambivalent relationship between the two parties.

Bhabha considers that ambivalence cuts through the apparently coherent and organic position of the colonizer by way of introducing a disruption in the relationship of the two parties. Hence, it disturbs the deceptive order of the relationship. In this way, this paradigm undermines the position of the colonizer (native) by inducing the element of insecurity a cause of the colonizer's (native's) anxiety. Resultantly, the desire of having complacent, subservient, docile and mimicking colonized (migrant) eludes the colonizer. It unsettles the colonizer (native) towards the colonized (migrant). It manifests itself in ferocious or malleable racial tropes aimed to tame the subjectivity of the colonized (migrant) or to control the colonizer's (native's) own anxiety towards the colonized

(migrant). As a result, this encounter between the two parties is thoroughly ambivalent and sans monolithic orientation of the colonial dominance. The concept is further amplified vis-à-vis another Bhabhaesque concept, i.e., Mimicry.

#### d. **Mimicry**

It is another concept by Homi Bhabha which furthers the creative tension between the colonizer (native) and the colonized (migrant). Mimicry happens when the colonized (migrant) replicates the colonizer (native) by mimicking the colonizer's language, dress, politics, socio-cultural or even religious way of life. Contextualizing the migrant's experience in the hostland, mimicry also connotes a resourceful pattern of behavior. But how does it happen? Notably, one duplicates a powerful/influential person with an implicit desire to identify oneself with the privileged position. Apparently, such mimicking of the privileged comes at the cost of willful transmutation of one's own cultural identity. In this context, mimicry is perceived as a shameful act. Accordingly, when a migrant indulges in mimicry, s/he is usually ridiculed by other members of his or her community for the same.

However, Bhabha develops a positivist view of the notion of mimicry as well in his celebrated essay "Of Mimicry and Man". Here, Bhabha brings out the subversive power of the notion. On a deconstructionist note, mimicry assumes a performative role and thus acts to lay bare the inauthenticity of all covert structures of power. An important theorist Gandhi holds that "...the [colonized] subject often appears to observe the political and semantic imperatives of colonial discourse. But, at the same time, she systematically misrepresents the foundational discourse by articulating it. In effect, mimicry inheres in the necessary and multiple acts of translation, which oversee the passage from colonial vocabulary to its anti-colonial usage" (149). Further, if an African migrant, desiring to mimic an American, and is obsessed with the idea of complete identification with his/her host; such a tactic makes the American anxious at spotting the potential obliteration of the fissure between the two positions. It also brings forth the hollowness of the codes of superiority on the part of the colonizer (native). Importantly, the colonizer (native) desires that the colonized (migrant) to just mimic the master and also maintain a considerable distance. However, obsessive desire of the colonized (migrant) makes the master insecure of a possible subversion. Conversely, a naïve act of mimicking

the master position transforms the act of mimicry into mockery. Interestingly, both of these positions fuel anxiety on the part of the colonizer (native). Hence, it turns out to be an ambivalent relation between the two positions. In this sense, mimicry is an empowering tool as it "...locates an area of considerable political and cultural uncertainty in the structure of the imperial dominance" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 157). In this way, mimicry eludes the control and creatively subverts colonizer's authority over the colonized. Bhabha opines that "...the discourse of mimicry is constructed around ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excesses, its difference" (Location of Culture 86). Hence, it is a state of ambivalence and undermines the claims of imperial discourse.

#### e. **Stereotype**

The term refers to the discourse fixture(s) determining the relationship between the colonizer (native) and the colonized (migrant). Such fixtures?being a semiotic activity?are representatives of the imperial/racial dominance and constitute (and perhaps aspire to perpetuate) a stable and coherent relationship between the two parties. In other words, stereotypes impregnate signs with certain stable signifieds so as ensure a reductionist signification in the colonial framework and thus maintaining the Other. Again referring to Edward Said's examples, the 'Orientals' are stereotyped as despotic, clannish and are impossible to trust. They are perceived to be abstract and 'strange'. Huddart remarks that "...the colonizer circulates stereotypes about the laziness and stupidity of the colonized population" (24). Bhabha contends that stereotypes deal with the problem of fixing individuals and denying them to have a sense of their own identity. In this sense, it falsifies reality for the colonized. At the same time, stereotype is also representative of anxious colonial subjectivity. Bhabha states: "Racist stereotypical discourse, in its colonial moment, inscribes a form of governmentality that is informed by a productive splitting in its constitution of knowledge and exercise of power" (Location of Culture 83).

Homi Bhabha develops the polemics of this concept in his seminal essay "The Other Question: Stereotype, discrimination and the discourse of colonialism". He contends that the notion of stereotype categorizes a group of people as 'the other'. However, this conception is ontologically dual and paradoxical. On the one hand, this notion claims fixity and rigidity. On the contrary, the notion of stereotype also necessitates the

perpetual repetition of the other without inducing any alteration in the stereotype. If the sign is not repeated, the assembly between the signifier and the signified turns out to be unhinged weaving a whirlpool of derision and desire. However, the necessity of iteration opposes the notion of fixity and rigidity the first ground of the stereotype. It leads to a resistance-laden, paradoxical and ambivalent situation in the relationship of the colonizer (native) and the colonized (migrant). Hence, the stereotypization is a mutual problem for both the categories the one who is stereotyped and the one who stereotypes. So whatever is said about the identity of the other; is simultaneously true about the self as well. Accordingly, colonial/racial discourse is a potent site to dig out and deconstruct such stereotypization for the purpose of reconstructing the colonized/migrant.

To conclude, the preceding discussion builds the conceptual framework of some important precepts of diaspora and postcolonial theory for the purpose of reconstructing the poetics of diasporic space. The discussed framework/percepts hold compelling implication, especially in relation to understand the anguished tale of the migrants experiencing the pangs of diasporic space in different proportions and with varying results.

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## **Girish Karnad's *Tughlaq* : Revisiting History in Postcolonial India**

*Disha\**

Postcolonial theory may be said to have originated in mid twentieth century texts of writers like Franz Fanon and Amie Cesaire. The term Postcolonial literature now has replaced the traditional categories of "Commonwealth literature or Third world literature". The history of postcolonial criticism can be traced back to Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth and Black Skins White Masks*. His works explore the psychological effects of racism and colonialism by connecting the issues of race and class. He argues that first step for the colonized people in the process of finding their voice against oppression, is to reclaim their own past. The ground breaking work in postcolonial theory is however, *Orientalism* by Palestinian thinker Edward Said. *Orientalism* exposes the Eurocentric view point that takes for granted the superiority of what is western and inferiority of what is not. Said identifies and critiques the long standing and culturally constructed distinction between Occident and Orient. Borrowing from Michel Foucault's notion of discourse, Said argues that the knowledge about Orient was not disinterested knowledge; it reinforced the actual colonial practices. Hans Bertens comments in his book *Literary Theory: the Basics* that for Said, *Orientalism*—this western discourse about the Orient—has traditionally served hegemonic purpose. (203) Said adopts the notion of hegemonic oppression of Gramsci, which is domination by consent—the way the ruling class succeeds in oppressing the other classes with their apparent approval. (Bertens 204) The colonial power based on oriental knowledge does not only rely on physical force but also on the consent of natives. The minds of the natives are colonized when they accept the constructed colonial stereotype of themselves as "other". Homi Bhabha extends the limits of postcolonialism by introducing the poststructuralist stance. He challenges the notion of a fixed identity by introducing his concept of "hybridity". Bhabha views hybridity as a stage where cultural interaction between the colonized and the colonial cultures takes place and leads to a fused culture. Hans Bertens suggests in his work that Commonwealth literature studies the central

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grounds between the cultural products of former colonies and metropolis. But postcolonial theory and criticism emphasizes the tension between metropolis and former colonies from non-Eurocentric point of view. (200)

Postcolonial studies seek to understand how oppression, resistance and adaptation had occurred during the colonial rule. It analyses specific strategies of power, domination, hegemony and oppression utilized by the colonizers in their colonies. Therefore postcolonial studies uncover the ideological context of discrimination and unequal power relations and include a vast array of writers and subjects. In fact, very different geographical, historical, social, religious, and economic concerns of the different ex-colonies dictate a wide variety of themes. This literature is concerned with the themes like cultural change after the era of colonialism, misuse of the power, exploitation and suppression of common masses by the native authorities. Even though the large power ceases to control them as a colony, the ex colonizers and present rulers still seem to continue imposing power over the natives resulting in the deteriorating condition of the masses. It leads to the question as to who is in power actually and does an independence from colonial oppression really mean independence. Many postcolonial writers address these concerns. They include writers like Salman Rushdie, Rohinton Mistry, Amitav Ghosh, Gita Mehta, Vikram Seth, Dharamvir Bharati, Arundhati Roy etc. In the genre of drama Vijay Tendulkar's Ghasiram Kotwal and Mohan Rakesh's Ashad Ka Ek Din, Girish Karnad's *Tughlaq*, Tipu Sultan are some of the examples of literary works which probe into these issues by exploiting Indian mythology and history.

This research paper intends to study *Tughlaq* written by Girish Karnad from the postcolonial perspective. Girish Karnad has secured his place among the first row Indian dramatists with many well-known and successful plays. Girish Karnad along with playwrights like Vijay Tendulkar and Rakesh Mohan revive the vogue of Indian theatre by using Indian mythology and history in their plays. Along with presentation of contemporary themes, his plays are also flavoured with rich cultural fabrics of Indian.

*Tughlaq* is a play woven around Sultan Muhammad Bin Tughlaq who ruled medieval India from 1324 to 1351. Karnad refers back to historians like Ishwari Prasad and Zia-ud-Din Barani's text *Tarikh-i-Firuz Shahi* to portray his central character. Tughlaq reigned twenty six

years and has inspired so much attention and criticism since then, that perhaps no other king was able to evoke. His reign seems like a tale of badly executed political and religious policies which tore his vast empire into pieces. Once an ambitious and powerful emperor, having the dream to establish India as a united nation, he was reduced to a tyrant ruler near the end of his reign and became known as mad Muhammad for his whimsical political decisions. He came to throne after Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq and was known for his controversial political policies which caused the ruin of his empire. Aparna Dharwadker writes in her essay titled "Reading Girish Karnad's *Tughlaq*" figures out that history of Tughlaq came to us through two sources: medieval Muslim historians like Amir Khusrau (1253-1325) and Barani (d. 1357) and through the works of British Orientalist historians (46). On the contrary, Indian historians after independence like Mohammad Habib and K.A. Nizami had portrayed Tughlaq in much positive light.

*Tughlaq* is a multi-faceted creation which can be read on various levels. It is undoubtedly, powerful depiction of existential persona of once a mighty Sultan whose condition deteriorates to the extent that his subjects start to recognise him as mad Muhammad. On historical level, play fictionalizes the ups and down Tughlaq and his entire kingdom went through. But to view the play merely as an account of last years of Tughlaq's reign will not be justice with the writing. The depiction of some important historical happenings like the shifting of the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad, abolishing of jiziyah from Hindus, rebellions of Ain-ul-Mulk and other courtiers transcends the temporal and spatial boundaries and emerges as a critique of functioning of present state stuffed with endless intrigues and politics which finally leads towards the deteriorating condition of common masses along with existential crisis for the persons at the peak of the power. Parminder Singh in his article "Semiotics of History and Literature: Girish Karnad's *Tughlaq*" writes: The text of the play . . . develops into a discourse about the dialectical interplay between the absolute power of the state and the existentialist destiny of the persona of the ruler. In this way the discourse turns to be an analytical comment upon the formation, intricacies and the problematic of the modern state (63).

Instead of becoming a chronological sequencing of the reign of a great king, the play emerges as the fictional reconstruction not only of his political and religious policies and their effects but also of his

existential persona. *Tughlaq* can be better comprehended as a play concerned with the times in which it is written, than the time period it talks about. As Dharwadker also suggests: *Tughlaq* invokes significant elements in modern Indian political and cultural experience by presenting an ostensibly un-polemical, self-sufficient historical narrative that a contemporary audience can apply to its own situation. (47)

The play came in 1965 in Kannada, and in 1970 in English, the time period when Indian masses were disillusioned by the unfulfilled promises of Indian leadership after independence. The hopes and desires given by newly found independence were shattering slowly. It is noteworthy that this was the time when "the state had already began to show its repressive tentacles after a period of about two decades known for its supposedly idealistic and democratic thrust" (Singh Semiotics 63). The decade of sixties is peculiar for betraying the underlying stability of Indian economic and political system. This decade gave concentrated expression to the disillusionment, dissatisfaction and anger among the masses against the established system and its representatives. The unchallenging rule of Congress party in centre as well as states except Kerala, up to that time, in a way symbolized the relative stability of political system. But in 1967, Congress party was defeated in assembly election of many states. It was an indication of disillusionment among masses about Nehruvian claims about independent India. Secularism, democracy and socialism were watchwords of this phase which were later incorporated in Indian constitution itself. But the underlying reality of society was very much different. The dreams of a developed and prosperous country were shattered. For the audience of 1960's, the play was a political allegory of Nehru era that ended in 1967. *Tughlaq* is repeatedly compared to Nehru who is known as an idealist and visionary politician but whose dreams of prosperous India are not fulfilled. After a decade the play was also compared to very intelligent politician Indira Gandhi who is condemned for her imposition of emergency in 1975. It will be better to say that the play is concerned less with specific political figure but with general Indian political atmosphere.

The reality of India of sixties was diametrically opposite to the promises and dreams of a self-sufficient, developing and affluent nation. There was poverty, hunger, diseases, unemployment and communal drifts resulting in the wide spread resentment and disillusionment among the masses. Rudder Dutt and K.P.M. Sundaram give some statistical

information about the inflation during the period in their book *Indian Economy*. The price position during third five year plan (1961-66) deteriorated badly (515). Years of 1965-66 witnessed serious famine conditions all over the India. Next two years were years of acute inflation. The condition of Indian economy was so fragile that it had to devalue its currency in mid-sixties under heavy pressure which had adverse implications on economy. This economic and political condition later on led the country towards many agitations by farmers, students and labourers. *Tughlaq* has successfully captured this atmosphere of chaos, dissatisfaction, disillusionment, political and economic instability, state repression culminating into agitations and revolts of masses.

There is not only one folded comparison between *Tughlaq* and Nehru or any other politician, but the entire play is quite comparable to the political, social and economic instability of India in decade of sixties, which has ironically continued till this age. Thus, this work of art acquires universal dimensions and becomes a satire on repressive state power. The play becomes an ironic commentary upon vision of India as a democratic, secular, tolerant republic. For which playwright goes back to the history of a Muslim king of thirteenth century popularly known as the educated fool. While talking about the contemporaneity of the work, Karnad rightly said:

What struck me absolutely about *Tughlaq*'s history was that it was contemporary. That fact that here was the most idealistic, most intelligent king ever to come on the throne of Delhi. . . and one of the greatest failures also. And within the span of twenty years this tremendously capable man had gone into pieces. . . . And I felt in early sixties India had also come very far in the same direction-the twenty year period seemed to me very much striking parallel. In a sense, the play reflected the slow disillusionment my generation felt with the new politics of independent India: the gradual erosion of the ethical norms that guided the movement for independence, and the coming to terms with cynicism and real politik. (qtd. in Nayak 156)

The play is divided into thirteen scenes and opens with the announcement of compensation for a Brahmin whose land was confiscated wrongly. Later this Brahmin is exposed as a Muslim washer man named Aziz. The play progresses with the declaration of Sultan to move the capital from Delhi to Daulatabad. Scene Second introduces some major characters like Barani (historian of his court) Najib (vizier)

and step mother of Tughlaq along with the news of rebellion of Ain-ul-Mulk and Sheikh Imam-ud-Din. The real face of Tughlaq and other courtiers is exposed with much crafted murder of Imam-ud-din and defeat of Ain-ul-mulk and other Amirs along with Shihab-ud-din. Next part of the play deals with the shift of capital, the sufferings of subjects on the way and autocracy of bureaucrats. The last scenes of the play portray the assassination of Ghiyas-ud-din by Aziz, orders of death penalty for stepmother who is accused of planned assassination of Najib and grim pitiable condition of sultan. The kingdom is full of lawlessness, chaos and endless rebellions to which the Sultan is unable to suppress.

As the play opens, in the very first scene the commentary on the leadership begins. There appear contradictory opinions about the Sultan. In the first scene people criticize their ruler for posing to be secular. They mock their Sultan who wants to be one with his subjects. They suspiciously interrogate his act of abolishing jiziya for Hindus. A Brahmin wins the case against Sultan himself and is given due compensation. But this secularism of Sultan is suspected by common masses, even a sentry ironically announces to the crowd gathered to hear the judgment "the show's over! Go home"(10). This is very surprising that neither Hindus nor Muslims are satisfied with this decision. As the play progresses, the judgment of his subjects comes true and his mask of secularism evaporates. With the progress of the play this dissatisfaction of the masses with ruler and his policies goes on increasing. In second scene, there is news of riots in Kanpur. This dissatisfaction reaches its culmination in the eleventh scene which is a heart rendering portrayal of hunger and disease. The vivid portrayal of deteriorating condition of masses is drawn in the conversation of some men: Third Man: he says the roads are linked with skeletons. A man starved to death right in front of his eyes. In Doab, people are eating barks of the trees, he says. Yes, and women have to make do with skins of horses. (82)

The orders of Sultan to vacate Delhi and to shift Daulatabad adds immensely to the miseries of his subjects, as hundreds of people died on the way due to heat, long distance, lack of arrangements starvation and dishonest officials. This dissatisfaction is not only visible in common masses but also in influential people Ulemas and Amirs of the kingdom. Rebellion of Ain-ul-Mulk and Sheikh Imam-ud-din, which

clearly hints that everything is not fine in the kingdom and there is resentment and dissatisfaction with the king. This dissatisfaction reaches its peak when some amirs and Shihab-ud-din conspire to kill the Sultan apparently because they find his policies unIslamic. But their real intention behind the conspiracy is to usurp the power and to be more influential in Delhi. The comment of an Amir, justifying the proposed assassination of Sultan is Important here: Why is he taking us to Daulatabad? Have you wondered about that? I'll tell you. He wants to weaken the Amirs. You see, we are strong in Delhi. This is where we belong. But Daulatabad is a Hindu city and we'll be helpless there. We will have to lick his feet. (39)

The play is full of political maneuverings to seize the right to rule. Tughlaq himself is a surprising intelligent craftsman of these conspiracies. In the second scene of the play, Tughlaq is rejoicing over finding a new move in chess. This is artistic indication of the playwright towards the chess like political moves and counter moves of Tughlaq and his Amirs. Tughlaq proves his unmatched skill to defeat his enemy by crafting murder of Sheikh Imam-ud-din and defeat of Ain-ul-Mulk. Sheikh Imam-ud-din, realizing that he is entrapped by Sultan acknowledges his remarkable capacity to conspire, "you know, Sultan, I'm just beginning to understand why they say you are the cleverest man in the world" (30). The dual standards and cunningness of Sultan is uncovered and situation becomes very dramatic when he announces a day of mourning in honour of Sheikh and says, "When men like Him die, it's sin to be alive" (28). Commenting upon the extent of crudity of political moves of Sultan, Barani says, "Oh God! Aren't even the dead free from your politics?" (53). The idealistic presentation of motives by Amirs and the secular, pro-people image of Sultan splinters and the perspective shifts to the exposition of real motives and purposes. The initial declarative and ideal speeches fill the atmosphere of play with irony as their real purposes lay bare. The real face of power politics is unmasked with the growth of the play. The world of politics emerged as, in the words of Barani, a "market of the corpses" where even father and brother can be sacrificed to reach the throne (66). His most trustworthy courtiers and friends like Ain-ul-Mulk proved to be traitors. In his conversation to Barani, he says with frustration, "All those persons in whom I reposed my trust have turned out to be traitors. What is happening?"(185). A very ironic example of this

disguised evil is that of Aziz, a Muslim dhobi, who is very important and completely fictional character of the play. He is introduced in first scene, disguised as a Brahmin to obtain some monetary benefits by appealing against the Sultan himself. Later he kills and takes the place of Ghiyas-ud-din to obtain royal favours. Power is a licensed evil for Aziz. For him there is no use of raping a woman out of lust, in his views, "first one must have power and authority from the Sultan or high officers. . . . Then there is some meaning in raping" (69). For him, the definition of real king is "One should be able to rob a man and then stay there to punish him for getting robbed. That's called "class"-that's being a real king" (69).

Some critics consider Aziz as Tughlaq's alter ego as both play different roles and hide their real faces in masks. In this context P. Ramamoorthy says in his article "He That Playeth the Sultan: A Study of Tughlaq": The various roles played by Aziz-that of a Brahmin, of a victim, and more significantly that of Khalif-are pointers to the fact that Aziz converts life into a stage and goes on with his role-playing. Aziz is Muhammad's "shadow", his "other". (159) Like Aziz, Sultan is also an evil in disguise as there is widening gap between his hidden agendas and his promises of a just and liberal rule. Very dramatically the mask of a benevolent king split away and his real face of a tyrant, ambitious ruler comes to light. When his real identity is exposed, Aziz rightly claims to be true disciple of Sultan in the world of politics: But may I say that since Your Majesty came to the throne, I have been your most devout servant. I have studied every order, followed every instruction, considered every measure of your majesty's with the greatest attention. I insist I am Your majesty's true disciple. (93)

Seeing the reflection of his own misdeeds, Sultan himself feels unable to punish Aziz and forgives him, although he knows that he is acting "like a fool" (83). What is very crudely visible in Aziz is subtly hinted at in the personality of *Tughlaq*.

Another important theme in the play is alliance of politics and religion. Religious and political discourses are completely fused with each other and used to further their mutual objectives. Religion is merely an instrument in the hands of Sultan or his opponents to serve their narrow interests. Sheikh Imam-ud-din, who initially appears as ideological upholder of Islamic values and principles, is later exposed as an emblem of this alliance. The close analysis of conversation

between Sultan and Tughlaq in chapter third reveals him as the mouth piece of Amirs and Ulemas. He says to Sultan, "But if one fails to understand what the Koran says, one must ask the Sayyids and the Ulema. Instead you have put the best of them behind bars in the name of justice"(26). Parminder Singh says about this acquisition of the Sheikh, in his essay: This is not an innocently made charge against Muhammad. This is what his religiously oriented speeches at Kanpur and, as their aftermath, massacre of the innocents and burning of the city also stand for. Even for a justification of the later plans of the nobles to execute Mohammad, it is Sheikh's religious being which is made use of. (72) The fact that speeches of the Sheikh results in communal riots in Kanpur proves him unconcerned about the welfare of masses. He deliberately raises the voice against Sultan to create an envious atmosphere in the kingdom. But Muhammad, cunning and clever as he is, succeeds in sabotaging the schemes of the Sheikh and uses him as a puppet to suppress the rebellion of Ain-ul-Mulk.

After the shift of capital from Delhi to Daulatabad, famine adds to the misery of people. Failing to provide the bread and butter, Sultan offers prayers to the starving masses. In eleventh scene the utter dissatisfaction of masses with Sultan is visible through the conversation of some common men. On the royal announcement that public prayers, which were initially banned will be started again, a person remarks: First Man: Prayers! Prayers! Who wants prayers now?

Second Man : Ask them to give us some food.

First Man : There's no food. Food is only in the palace. It's prayers for us.

Second Man : The Amirs have food.

First Man : We starve and they want us to pray. They want to save our souls. (82)

Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq cleverly arranges the sermons of Aziz who is in disguise of Ghiyas-ud-din Muhammad to give spiritual justification of sufferings of his masses i.e. sufferings are the obvious and just outcome of sins. Sultan delivers a speech to his subjects while introducing the Sheikh: We have waited long and our sins have grown and like shadows clung to our feet. They have made us dumb and have deprived us of our prayers. Our sins have become the fiery sun and have burnt our crops. (84)

In *Tughlaq* prayer is used, as Anantha Murthy points out, as leitmotiv of the play. Prayer is reduced to mockery when Sultan himself assassinates his father and brother during the sacred time of prayers. But later to win the trust of his subjects and to establish himself as a religious king, who is very genuine towards the doctrines of Islam, he makes prayers compulsory for every Muslim. The situation becomes more ironic when his courtiers also choose the occasion of prayers to kill their Sultan under the name of Islam. These persons of noble lineage wish to launch a holy war against Tughlaq under the name of Islam. The presence of holy man like Sheikh Shams-ud-din assures the credibility of their motive. But the whole situation takes an ironic turn with the decision of assassination of Sultan at the time of compulsory prayers. The readers start to suspect the real motives of conspirators. The comment of Anantha Murthy, in the introduction to *Three Plays*, about this incident is noteworthy: The use of prayer for murder is reminiscent of what Tughlaq himself did to kill his father. That prayer which is most dear to Tughlaq, is violated by him as well as his enemies, is symbolic of the fact that his life is corrupted at its very source. (141)

Sultan banned compulsory prayers after the incident and prayers are reduced to mockery when Sultan again restores the right to pray with the arrival of Ghiyas-ud-din to give people spiritual justification of their sins. This is a very well-known fact that politics and religion are fused with each other even in contemporary politics. This allegorical depiction of the modern concerns is not restricted only to the present political atmosphere but dates back to the period of colonialism. British rulers shrewdly played a game of 'divide and rule' and formed a communal drift to strengthen their rule in India. Political parties have always exploited religious sentiments of masses to strengthen their vote bank. The consequence of this is the emergence of corrupt and identity politics full of all sort of shameless intrigues. The incidents like demolition of Babri mosque, Delhi anti-Sikh Riots and Gujarat riots are some recent examples of this crude use of religion for serving political purposes. Punjab has also witnessed the agony of fundamentalist politics more than a decade. Some Hindu and Sikh religious fundamentalist parties are still actively influencing the political scenario of the country.

*Tughlaq* is not only about historical and political tale of endless violence, manoeuvrings, murders and betrayals but also a psychological portrayal of a monarch and his existential crisis which deepens towards

the end of the play. This work is a complex rendering of ideas of a king and his final crisis ridden situation in which he stands alone at the height of his power which is actually hollow from within. The crisis ridden situation of once a powerful monarch hints towards the weak foundations of a social setup on which the empire of Tughlaq is built. The monarch, once so powerful and ambitious reaches to a dead end in complete exhaustion at the end of the play. One of the major concerns of Karnad in exploring the history of Muhammad- bin -Tughlaq is to probe into his transformation from an idealist emperor into a tyrant ruler. His journey starts from a ruler "who is not afraid to be human" "and invites people "to confide their worries in him" (15), ends in popularizing himself as mad Muhammad and "the Lord of the skins"(87). The person in power is supposed to be vindictive, prejudiced and unjust to correspond with the basic instinct of power. Power, directed against the powerless majority of people, leaves no room for idealism, purity and equality. Tughlaq seems the helpless victim of his own endless aspirations as a monarch which led him towards not only a political but moral and ethical crisis as well. Barani, revealing the real face of politics, suggests Tughlaq to quit this "world of corpses":

But you are a learned man, your majesty; you are known the world over for your knowledge of philosophy and poetry. . . .that's where you belong Your majesty, in the company of learned man. Not in the market of corpses. (66)

Tughlaq's obsession with his failures and his own guilt has caused so much confusion that he offers his starving subjects prayers instead of food and refuses to punish Aziz even after the revelation of his severe crimes. Tughlaq's madness and tyranny is the reflection of his powerlessness which he poses as power. His brutality is the result of his futile attempt to overcome the anguish arisen out of his shattered dreams. R.T. Bedre and Meera Giram comment on the life of Tughlaq in their essay titled "Girish Karnad's *Tughlaq*: a Study in Existentialism and The Absurd": The Sultan's journey is from idealism to madness via alienation, frustration and cruelty. His readings of ideals reflected in his policies and behaviour present him as an alien threat to the time honoured and acceptable conventions of kingship of his time. His exercise of impartial justice and equal human treatment to the Hindus alienate him from the mainstream Muslim subjects and priesthood. He is called 'an insult to Islam'. (np) Tughlaq's nostalgia for his youth, when he dreamt

of India as a united nation, is evident from his long speech addressed to his young watchman: Nineteen. Nice age! An age when you think you can clasp the whole world in your palm like a rare diamond. I was twenty one when I came to Daulatabad first, and built this fort. I supervised the placing of every brick in it and I said to myself, one day I shall build my own history like this brick by brick . . . suddenly a sentry called far from. "Attention! Attention!" And to that challenge the half burnt torch and half built gate fell apart.

No, Youngman, I don't envy your youth. All that you have to face and suffer is still ahead of you. (64)

Repeatedly *Tughlaq* is made to realize the vast gulf between aspiration and fulfillment, ideal and reality. His cruelty and tyranny can be seen as vehicles to help him to overcome his feeling of alienation and sense of absurdity. He is not only the subject of social alienation but also of self alienation. *Tughlaq* is left alone in condition of insomnia, in the last scene of play. He is completely exhausted and falls asleep. His conversation with Barani, which is the last dialogue of *Tughlaq* in the play, is significant to quote here: I am suddenly feeling tired. And sleepy. For five years sleep had avoided me and now suddenly it's flooding back. Go, Barani. But before you go- pray for us (98).

Rajesh Sharma compares *Tughlaq* with Nietzsche in his article titled "Girish Karnad's *Tughlaq*: A Nietzschean Enigma". Both were ahead of their times. *Tughlaq* wants to reshape the history and seeks redemption in history. But he becomes the mere instrument of history, instead of making history his instrument. To be the architect of history is impossible. Hence, when *Tughlaq* seeks solace in history, he finds himself reduced to nothing. His passion to offer a secular rule to his subjects is an attempt to rediscover his lost spiritual vision. But this vision has broken down when he encounters the reality. Most of his political plans prove utopian, visionary and imaginary, end up in complete failure and cause untold sufferings to his masses. Thus, *Tughlaq* of Karnad experiences social and personal alienation, partly because of his over ambitious nature and partly because he is at the top of a social-political system which is falling from within its own foundations. Through *Tughlaq*, Girish Karnad has brought to readers a bygone era of history through his unmatched power of imagination. Far from being a factual representation of history, play is full of artistic imagination and creative insight. Through the historical tales, *Tughlaq* converses

with the present political conditions in India. The past is presented through political scenario of present and the present is to be understood through past.

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## Vindication of Feminism in Durrani's *My Feudal Lord*

Rajan Kapoor\*

*The paper in question is an attempt to understand the psyche of a male dominated feudal and patriarchal society that snatches away all the chances of upward mobility of a woman and tries to keep her under its thumb. The paper also seeks to bust the myth that women belonging to elite class have successfully broken the rigid cycle of gender inequality and enjoy a respectable status in society.*

**Keywords:** Feudal, Gender Inequality, Elite class, Patriarchal etal

*My Feudal Lord* is a postcolonial feminist autobiography that frankly makes a touching commentary on the miserable existence of women of Indian sub-continent through the use of memory, personal experience. In the novel, real life is fictionalized to present a true and real account of the colonial past and the history of the nation with its sacred socio-political norms. This postcolonial novel true to its purpose attempts to dig up the centuries old norms and limits of its nation's social and cultural past that marginalize women and other subordinate classes and accord them the treatment that can only be justified in a uncivilized world. Being a Postcolonial text, it contests disparities and attempts to raise issues that still confront humanity. It is the collective voice of those who have been suffering for centuries under the weight of illogical traditions and customs. This collective voice is basically the voice of the subaltern that includes blacks, aborigines, fair-sex etal. Since this group has failed to reap the benefits of freedom, it still finds itself colonized and tries to break the chains of slavery to end their colonization.

Durrani, the protagonist of the novel, is the collective voice of the women of Indian subcontinent. She narrates her horrific miserable tale to document her experience. But, in reality, her story is a saga of all those women who are forced to follow the bizarre and barbarous customs of their societies. It attempts to combat disparities which are directed at them. In the preface (here, titled Dedication), she dedicates this book to the people of Pakistan and she writes: To the people of Pakistan, who have repeatedly trusted and supported their leaders-

leaders who have, in return, used the hungry, oppressed, miserable multitudes to further their personal interests. I want the people of my country to know the truth behind the rhetoric, so that they might learn to look beyond the facade. It is an attempt by the author to take head on the perpetrators who by invoking the ghost of their rich cultural past subject women to torture and don't allow them to bloom. It tries to draw attention to the power dynamic; between men and women and also to the evil patriarchal norms that legitimize binaries between men and women. In the preface of the novel, she says: "To the five other ex-wives of Mustafa Khar, which have silently suffered pain and dishonour while he walked away with impunity. As the sixth wife, I am holding him accountable".

*My Feudal Lord* recounts the horrific experience of a beautiful woman who unfortunately gets trapped in the snare of a beast and faces the biggest challenge of her life. Her husband, Mustafa Khar who happens to be a protégé of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and a heartthrob of the masses of Pakistan turns Durrani's life into a hell by committing all types of atrocities on her. He beats her. He tortures her sexually. He curtails her freedom. And in a bid to seek an heir, forces pregnancies upon her. Finally, Durrani calls enough is enough and rebels against her powerful husband to end her subjugation and to unmask Mustafa. The novel thus studies the position of women born, brought up, and married in a closed Muslim society of Pakistan. She attacks patriarchal values that inculcate a sense of slavery into the essence of woman hood.

In Patriarchal discourse sex is not regarded as a means of mutual physical enjoyment but rather as a tool of domination. That is why Durrani tries to keep her marriage intact with monster Mustafa, realizing well that a divorcee has no place in a feudal society of Pakistan. This is how she recounts her loveless marriage: "There was not a single day that Mustafa did not hit me... I just tried my best not to provoke him... I was afraid that my slightest response to his advances would reinforce his image of me as a common slut. This was a feudal hang up: his class believed that a woman was an instrument of a man's carnal pleasure. If the woman ever indicated that she felt pleasure, she was a potential adulteress, not to be trusted. Mustafa did not even realize that he had crushed my sensuality. I was on automatic pilot... responding as much as important for him but never feeling anything myself. If he was satisfied there was a chance that he would be in a better humour.

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It was at these times that I realized that prostitution must be a most difficult profession"(106) Postcolonial literature also takes into account the attitude of the incumbent rulers who take over the reins after the colonizers leave the colonized for good. It studies how the so called our own rulers exploit the masses and give them the same treatment, rather the worse, that the colonizers used to give to their subjects. The subaltern are silenced, tricked and befooled. The novel reflects how the native rulers of Pakistan usurped the political space and changed the political idiom of the country and how conveniently and systematically they put the country on the path of dictatorship and this is all done in the name of establishing democracy in the country. How the military regime overthrows the duly elected democratic government of Bhutto in a coup and how it connives with the foreign powers to hang Bhutto-- hence democracy in Pakistan. Mustafa ,the protégé of Bhutto, in a bid to save his life enters into a secret deal with the military rulers and pledges to bring certain incriminating documents from London to get his master nailed by the military rulers back home. But, he does not honour the deal, and cheats the military rulers at the risk of his own life. But at the same time he fails to save his master from gallows. How Mustafa enters into a clandestine agreement with India to militarily overthrow the undemocratic Zia's regime and how then Indian government supplies weapons to the detractors of Zia to destabilize his regime are a few startling facts about the politics of subcontinent.

This novel also tries to expose the real face of the rulers of Pakistan who clamour to establish democracy in the state of Pakistan are in reality the real architect of keeping their populace under their thumb and have willfully denied their rights to them. How the corrupt rulers have usurped the political firmament and space in Pakistan and have subverted the institutions of governance to willfully deny the legitimate dues to their own people are a few glaring facts that this novel attempts to lay bare .How Mustafa fakes illness and get special treatment for a non -existent heart disease in the jail while the scum of the nation struggle hard to seek treatment for the diseases that afflict them. There is no medicine, doctors and infrastructure to treat critically ill- patients. And above all, corruption is all pervasive in the hospitals. Describing the corrupt system of hospitals she says", That evening, beaming with pride of accomplishment, I encountered the children's doctor and told him that I had raised 60,000 rupees for medical supplies.

He advised me not to hand it over.' If the drugs and supplies are here,' he warned,' they will just be stolen by the nurses end interns and windup on the black market.'(269)

In Fanonian observation, Mustafa is a native colonizer who treats their subjects the way colonizers treated them. Mustafa,as per Fanon's argument, is a neo -colonizer who belongs to the indigenous middle class that uses its privileged education and position to replicate the colonial administration of the nation for its own benefits. He exploits the people not dissimilar to the colonialists. It is a situation when in Fanon's words ,the national bourgeoisie steps into the shoes of the former European settlement'. The coup enacted by Zia in which a duly elected democratic government of Bhutto was overthrown and the people of Pakistan was denied their legitimate political rights and the subversion of constitution corroborate Fanon's entertainment for the feudal lords. These feudal lords relish mujras --- a legacy of the Mogul and unabashedly discuss the intricacies of the movement of dancer's body in the presence of their wives .These women represent proletariats who remain at the mercy of their masters. Since Mustafa belongs to bourgeoisie class, he doest not mind giving the shabbiest treatment to women ,including his wife sherry who is beaten for trivial mistakes she commit: If she forgot to tell the servants to switch on the hot water; If she misplaced something; If she delayed having his cloth pressed(76).But Sherry has to meekly endure this torture as: A Pakistani woman will endure almost everything in order to hold a marriage together. (77)

In Pakistani society, the entity of the women is of an inferior being and she is considered to be an instrument of man's sexual desires and a machine for the perpetuation of the species. The elite women are lost in their dream world whereas the marginalized struggle for their day to day survival .Durrani writes: "The women in our circle did not seem to look beyond their raised noses. They chattered endlessly about disobedient servants, clothes, jewellery and interior decorations...Many a day in their lives of these women was completely devoted to the topic of what to wear that evening." (65) Mustafa is pathologically possessive of Durrani and beats her black and blue when he comes to know that she has got herself examined by a male doctor. In a fit of rage he tells Durrani, Male doctors! You have humiliated me. I shall not forgive you. You will pay for this stupid act."(138).Mustafa ,in a bid to make her wife look unattractive to others, forces upon her a fat rich

diet. This possessiveness takes an ugly turn when he asks Durrani to reveal the experience of 'intimate -moments' she has spent with her ex- husband Anees. When he fails to get a satisfactory reply, he dubs her a slut and thrashes her mercilessly. His possessiveness goes to the extent of calling her wife back from the Karachi hospital where she has been recuperating after her surgery.

Following Marxian observations wherein he talks of exploitation of the labourers, it can be argued that Durrani is a poor labourer and Mustafa wants that she should constantly attend to him. Even in the Multan jail, he expects 'labour' from her for two reasons. First, he treats his wife as his 'sex-slave'. Secondly, he expects 'manual- labour' from her during the period of his incarceration. Corroborating Mustafa's intentions, Durrani tells: Our personal relationship was still tenuous. Mustafa knew he has not won me over completely, and our brief visits did not give him sufficient time to brainwash me. He resented my freedom and jealous of the time I spent away from him, although it was entirely dedicated to his work. (265) Domestic production which is a form of material is a key factor in the understanding of conditions leading to the oppression of women. As a woman can bear a child (here, material), she is often exploited. Men want to have a control over the means of production and the material itself. Durrani's freedom is curtailed and her kids are abducted as Mustafa ---- a typical Feudal Lord considers Durrani as her property and the children she has gifted to him as the material. So, he kidnaps them. Mustafa was a typical feudal lord who considers it to be her right to beat his wives and by doing so he tries to keep them under his control. He always gives shabby treatment to Durrani to satisfy his male ego. When Durrani registers her protest over Mustafa's alleged illicit relations with her sister-in-law, he beats Durrani black and blue and hurts her psychologically by making her strip off her clothes. This incident hurts Durrani the most and cripples her spirit beyond salvation. In another incident Durrani is slapped when she refuses to wear glasses to hide her bruises which Mustafa has given to her. Mustafa's cruelty crosses all the limits when he beats his wife two hours after she gives birth to a Mustafa's child.

The novel also takes up an issue that has so long been considered taboo in the Indian sub-continent and any discussion on that still raises the eyebrows of the conservatives. And this is the issue of sexual rights of women. The women whether they belong to the upper strata

of society or on the lower rung of the social order, they enjoy little sexual rights. The condition of women living in closed societies is rather more pitiable. They are being treated as sexual slaves, and patriarchal access to control over these activities, constitute class relations. (The Second Wave 140).

Patriarchy breeds feudalism which, in turn, pushes womenfolk to the margins and gives men a handle to beat women with. Feudalism was a license to plunder, rape and even murder. (40). Patriarchy is a system that accords little importance to Fair- sex, and tries to suppress them in every possible way. Patriarchy is as old as human existence is it reinforces male-domination and tries every possible trick to encroach upon the space meant for women. The space includes biological, social, economic and political. It squeezes their legal and natural rights. It binds them in chains. Chains of taboos and worn out customs. Patriarchy has done a great harm to the cause of women emancipation. It has drilled a very strong sense of insecurity into their minds leaving them at the mercy of men for their physical, social and economic security. It has made them feel constitutionally strange and weak from their counterparts. Mustafa Khar is a product of patriarchal setup, and has learnt from his ancestors how to keep women under the domination of men. That men are constitutionally strong and can tie nuptial knot even at ripened stage of life to a girl much younger to them, is the one such element that strengthens patriarchy and perpetuates injustice against women. Under patriarchal authority, a woman has to deify the codified norms to keep balance among her daughterhood, wifehood and motherhood intact so that this pristine glory be preserved for her sisters to be handed to them to keep the juggernaut of patriarchy moving. "Mohammad Yar Khan was sixty-four years old when he married his third wife, a sixteen years old girl from Multan, who became Mustafa's mother" (40)

The protagonist of the novel indicts Muslim society. Being a closed society, it does not give women much space and forces them to observe a set of unjust rules without making any compliant. About her society she says, "Apart from my father, brother and a few close relatives, men were alien creatures, and from my earliest moments I was trained to avoid them" (28). Patriarchal norms, she believes, thrive on a host of constructs like law, religion, traditions racism etc. Durrani faces house arrest when her mother gets wind of her yet to blossom love with Annes. The elders of Mustafa Khar too does a great injustice

to Wazir--the illiterate and the first unfortunate wife of Mustafa when her marriage is dissolved and her hand is forcibly given to his younger brother-in-law. The tag of divorcee in a feudal set up is a curse. So, she is saved! But Mustafa's escapades are not challenged. He shows a great disrespect to the institution of marriage, gets married to Firdaus, Naubahar and Safia only to walk out of the wedlock. When he becomes the governor of Punjab province, he breaks his marriage off Naubhar to save his stature. He shamelessly says, "In my position, I cannot afford it" (94). Safia with whom Mustafa keeps marriage vows intact for seven years without displaying his love towards her and just visiting her for a few hours in the course of this period kicks her off his life when her illicit relations with Mustafa's younger brother are discovered. Adultery is a sin in Islam. Mustafa shows a great mercy to Safia as Islamic laws empower Mustafa to stone Safia to death. How benevolent Mustafa is! Here, Durrani believes in Simone de Beauvoir's view on the marginalization of the second sex: They have no past, no history, no religion of their own and they have no such solidarity of work and interest as that of the proletariat. They live dispersed among the males, attached through residence, housework, economic condition, and social standing to certain men--- fathers or husbands---more firmly than they are to other women. (The Second Sex 19).

Mustafa, like his feudalistic clan, considers woman a commodity. For Mustafa, a woman, like land is "power, prestige and a property" a commodity meant for utilization and consumption in which ever way the master deems fit. This irrationally possessive behaviour of Mustafa is reminiscent of the Duke of Ferrara in Browning's *My Last Duchess*. Mustafa who is a representative of "Capitalist Patriarchy" does not want to empower his wife as he likes a true capitalist wants to have only his control over the modes of production. Following Maxim's observations, it can be concluded that women constitute a class that is deprived of the right to means of production. Men is a special class--- a class that wields control over means of production. This gap is the key factor that leads to the oppression of women.

To teach her bad husband a lesson, she writes an auto-biography to reveal her personal secrets and to expose Mustafa. Thus, *My Feudal Lord* is a vindication of feminism. It is a voice of the oppressed women. It hurls criticism at the patriarchal system and calls for its discontinuation and very strongly pleads for equity in man-woman rights.

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## Shifting Identity on the Fiction of Anita Desai Special Study - Cry the Peacock

*Rekha Rani\**

Anita Desai occupies a very prominent place, so far as Indian writing in English is concerned. Of all the contemporary Indian English fiction writers, Anita Desai is considered the most powerful novelist. She has made an outstanding contribution to Indian English fiction. She is a novelist of urban milieu. She began to write in English at the age of seven and published her first story at the age of nine. As a novelist she made her debut in 1963 with 'Cry the Peacock'. Her 'Fasting Feasting' was a finalist for the 1999 Booker Prize. She received the Guardian Award for children's fiction for the novel 'The Village by the Sea' and the 1978 national academy of letters award for 'Fire on the Mountain'.

Anita Desai finds place in book reviews, Journals, Interviews and seminars. In critical Literature on Indian writing in English, Anita Desai is seldom obliterated. She is of a different sort. She refuses to accept abstractions and Idealistic representation rather she explores the disturbed psyche of the modern Indian women and also tries to strike a balance between instinctual needs and intellectual aspirations. The central characters are seen in the quest of their individual identity. Characters do play a very important role in the fiction. They may be round or flat. The Concept of shifting identity involves the roundness of the character.

Identity means the personality of a character. It includes the name, profession and status of a character. Secondly, it also means what a character thinks about himself/ herself, what a character wants to be and what he really is. Thirdly, it means what the other people think about a character because man is social animal. He cannot live in isolation. He has to dwell on in the society.

Shifting means changes in the character. Characters do change according to the circumstances. Identities of the characters shift because sometimes they mold themselves and sometimes they fail to do so. In both the cases the identities shift sometimes because of the temperament and attitude of the characters the identities shift. Identities of the characters do shift because change is the rule of the nature. Each and

everything changes with the passage of time, "If winter comes can spring be far behind". We are also reminded of Tennyson's & famous lines.

"old order changeth  
yielding place to a new one".

The novels of Anita Desai mark an important phase in the growth of fiction in India because of what Meena Belliappa calls, "The gradual shift from the external world to the inner world of the individual". As also because they "capture the atmosphere of the mind and directly involve the reader in the flow of the particular consciousness"<sup>1</sup> Asnani consider her fort to be "The exploration of the interior world plunging into the limitless depths of the mind and bringing into relief the hidden contours of the human psyche".<sup>2</sup>

Having been influenced of by writers like Emile Bronte, D. H. Lawrence, Anita Desai confesses that by writing novels termed as psychological and purely subjective, she has been left free to make use of "The language of the interior".<sup>3</sup> Anita Desai is a painter of moods, of wills, of conflicting choices and inner experiences. She prefers to delve "deeper and deeper in a character, a situation or a scene rather than going round about it".<sup>4</sup>

Anita Desai considers outer reality to be "one tenth visible section of the iceberg"<sup>5</sup>. And the psychological novelist plunges below the surface to illumine the remaining nine tenths of inner reality. Maya is the central character of the novel "Cry the Peacock", the first novel of Anita Desai the winner of the Sahitya Akademi Award. Maya is emotionally attached to her father. At her parental house, she was the central around which the whole household revolved. The financial position of her father was very sound. Her brother Arjun did not have cordial relation with his father. Her father showered his love and affection upon her. As a child Maya enjoyed each and every thing like a princess.

Maya is married to Gautama, a friend of her father's. Maya yearns for cordial and warm relationship with her husband. But Gautama is unable to understand feelings of Maya. Maya says, "No one, no one else loves me as my father does,"<sup>6</sup>. Gautama's family was entirely different. They never spoke of love and affection. Their conversation revolved round discussion in Parliament, newspaper editor accused of libel, cases of bribery and corruption.

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Maya feels that she is just like a toy to Gautama's family. They never took her seriously. She is unable to relate herself to Gautama's family. She feels herself alienated. She is a victim of loneliness. Maya is emotionally attached to her pet dog, Toto. Being a childless woman, she has developed fanatic attachment to her pet dog. Maya is very sensitive. Her husband is an intellectual being. He is unable to provide to Maya that emotional and physical satisfaction for which she yearns. Her pet dog symbolized her strong desire for a male companion. Pet dog also symbolizes her feeling of loneliness.

Gautama brings a cat, after the death of pet dog, which symbolizes Maya, Maya too is like the domestic cat who becomes neurotic like a iguanas. Iguanas suggest neurosis and sadness. The prophecy of the albino astrologer symbolizes a concern of her psyche. It symbolizes her fear and doubts.

Maya's relationship with Gautama was not smooth one. He was of her father's age. Maya suffers from Electra complex. Electra complex means daughters attach themselves with their fathers rather than their mothers. Maya suffers because of Electra complex she tries to find out all that was provided to her by her father, but her husband is unable to provide all that for which she longs. Maya perhaps forgets that Gautama is her husband not father. Every sort of relationship has its limits. Furthermore, when there is too much oil, the wick drowns same is the case with Maya. Her too much dependence on her father is the cause of her uneasy relationship with her husband. Maya is obsessed with the prophecy of an albino astrologer. At first she thinks it will be she to die. But later on she begins to think that Gautama too can be the victim of fate.

At night Gautama and Maya go out for stroll. They come up to the terraced end. She watches the moon. "And then Gautama made a mistake..... his last decisive one the talking, gesturing, he moved in front of me, thus coming between me and the worshipped moon, his figure an ugly, crooked grey shadow that transgressed its sorrowing chastity 'Gautama'! I cried in fury and thrust out my arms towards him, out at him, into him and past him, saw him fall then, pass through an immensity of air, down to the very bottom".<sup>7</sup>

After Gautama's death Maya is taken to her father's house. She gets lost in the joy of getting back home perhaps because her temporary

insanity made her forget the death of her husband whom she loved with all her heart.

Suddenly Maya's frightened voice is heard from the balcony perhaps it was a moment of sanity when she realized that she had caused her husband's death and committed suicide. Much critical ink has been split on this issue. The questions asked are.....whether Maya pushed Gautama or was it a mere accident? Again there are two questions.....whether Maya committed suicide or was she sent to a lunatic asylum?

"Cry the Peacock" is an open ended novel leaving the readers to form their conjecture. All the descriptions of 'Cry The Peacock' clearly reveal that Maya was a loving child. She turns out to be a neurotic. At the very end of the novel her identity shifts totally.

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## Feminist Perspective of Mulk Raj Anand's Gauri

*Varinder Kaur\**

What is woman? Is she an 'evil counterfeit' a "cursed pestilence" a "weak vassal" a "cleaving mischief" "the "Devil's gateway" "rosebud set with little willful thorns?" (Iqbal Kaur: 1992, p.13) "The female is female by virtue of a certain type of qualities ...we should regard the female nature is afflicted with some defectiveness" said Aristotle. Sexual politics is evident, in fact "legislators, priests, philosophers, writers and scientists have striven to show that subordinate position of woman is willed in heaven and advantageous on the earth. The religion invented by men reflect their wish for domination "(Beauvoir 1972:2)

A patriarchal society, thus tries to maintain its strong hold by keeping women down. The patriarchy promotes sexual politics by providing a very congenial atmosphere for the exploration and oppression of women because as Millet contends "The military, industry, technology, universities, science, political office and finance-in short every avenue of power within the society, including the coercive force of the police is entirely in male hands" (Millet 1970:25) The "stoical endurance "is the inevitable response of a woman forced to play a role that silences her voice and puts under erasure her identity. Hence the woman emerges as victim. In spite of being considered the 'Archetype" (Northrop Frye: 1972) of tradition, culture, domesticity and preservation, woman has for long suffered from "trauma of existence" in this hostile male-dominated society. The logo-centric society considers her as the "other" the "alien" subjugating her to the marginal position whether in life or presented in the literature. This sense of "alienation" and "eternal solitariness" distresses her. She could not endure this "on-belongingness" and utters a pathetic cry:

"Lord though has dealt me so many sorrows,  
To bear them, Couldst thou not also have lent me another heart?"  
(Anita Desai, Cry the Peacock)

Mulk Raj Anand vividly presents the social and psychological predicament of most Indian women. His novel "Gauri" tells the tales of an innocent village girl Gauri. Who is as gentle as cow, inflicted with

ceaseless and endless suffering mutely at the hands of her mother-in-law Kesro and his rustic husband Panchi. She lives with a trauma still she bears every cruelty without making any complaint. Gauri is driven out of the house by his husband Panchi on account of her being 'inauspicious" for the new family and undergoes her metamorphosis as a result of her miserable life at Hoshiarpur. At the end of the novel Gauri returns back home only to leave her husband forever. Anand depicts her as a "tortured soul" striving to find solace in the hostile patriarchy and undergoes a feminist trance to become a "virtuous" and "victorious" .She does remain aware of her inner strength and of her obligations to protect herself. Anand has depicted the priorities of this "other sex" in a right manner. The woman is no better "half" rather she is moving ahead to be a "complete" woman who is highly awakened to prove her worth in this male dominated society. She has to strive hard in this patriarchal society where the male thinks himself be superior despite of many flaws in his personality and female is inferior inspite of rich inner-self. Gauri has a trance in her personality in the last phase of the novel where she becomes a 'complete woman" with rays of "hope" and "survival".

Gauri, A village maiden and the young bride of Panchi led through the marriage rituals as reluctantly lifts her dupatta from her face, we first see "...a light wheat brown face with regular peasant features and the bloom of innocence in it." (Gauri, 29) Gauri is introduced as a very delicate and tender teenager who is married to Panchi a young orphan but rustic young man of chotta Piplan.

Gauri leads her married life under "taboos" She has to stay away from her kitchen as she is considered untouchable during her menstruation periods and not allowed to contaminate anything. During those isolated " days she often curls upon small string charpai p-laced in the archetype "dark room"that symbolizes the "nothingness" and "emptiness " in her miserable life. She is groping for the ray of hope but ends up in uttering a pathetic cry: "...Hai ni Mai, where are you? Why did you have to marry me off into this family? ...Hai!..." Anand observes that woman is always expected to be "patient".... But man is always there to check her patience as Panchi says: "...You must not cry, be patient" Anand wants to suggest that women are often victimized for breach of this foolish convention that forces them during their menstruation into isolation as untouchables. Anand maintains another taboo in the novel as Gauri

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has to put veil on her face in front of the strangers otherwise she is considered "impure" as Kesro remarks... "As usual her head was uncovered while she was working ...." She is always ill-treated by Kesro beaten by her husband Panchi without any fault. The irony of the situation is that Gauri is subjected to and submitted to these endless pain caused by the atrocities inflicted on her by her very own people. They are supposed to be her savior and her supporters ironically her "saviors" become her "destroyer". She is shattered emotionally, physically, psychologically and socially. And that is the high time she realized her inner strength to come out of her "hellish life" with Panchi. The people around her were not 'servile' rather "hostile "towards her.

Gauri accepts her traditional submissive role-to –suppress her passion and to accept her destiny without raising any question. She thinks herself non-existent for her family as she has no courage to speak or to utter because nobody is there to listen to her inner noise.

Rejecting their miserable plight in this male dominated hostile world, women writers are displaying intellectual courage, the courage to stand alone, to reorder the world which till now has been terribly oppressive to women. Gauri tries together her courage to express her inner feelings to her husband when he is in good mood but reciprocated with no sympathy and love. The feminists hold that man is always flirtatious by nature. He always plays tricks on the woman. He treats woman as a toy and never bothers about her feelings never understands her tender emotions and never thinks her as a human being even. He always tries to impose his authority over woman and makes her life hellish. If a woman answers him in the same coin, if she rejects him because of his worthlessness, what is wrong here?

Gauri always remembers the parting advise of her mother 'to be like Sita' at her in-laws house. But her mother-in-law Kasro and her husband Panchi ill-treat her and regard her as the incarnation of the Goddess Kali. As Kesro blames her "...from the day that this witch from big Piplan set foot in our house, we have had bad luck. You know the crops have withered and burnt up. The bullocks have fever. And there is no sign of rain! (Gauri, 39) Gauri is made responsible for every calamity falls upon the family. Kesaro, abuses Gauri calling her "a whore woman from Piplan," filthy woman", "sweeper woman" "shameless" etc. This frustrates Panchi and he beats Gauri. He justifies

his beating thus: "...the husband has to chastise his wife if she goes wrong." (Gauri, 51)

Gauri, is sold to Seth Jai Ram Das at Hoshiarpur by her mother Laxmi and Uncle Amru which was another bolt from blue for Gauri. But she does not surrender to the adverse circumstances created by her very own people. Then, is not an ordinary village girl. Her mother Laxmi, her uncle Amru, and her mother-in-law, Kesro are not able to understand her respect for character and individuality. They judge her by their own standards and create problems for her. She does not know the solution of the problems but she does remain aware of her own strength and of her obligation to protect herself. Gauri is thus a victim of circumstances, but she never completely resigns herself to them; and this especially when her family, so lacks of confidence in her as to ignore her dreams and aspirations. Since she is denied every opportunity to express herself, she remains alienated. The vanity of her long wait for understanding, communion ship and companionship turns her emotional world topsy-turvy and creates a psychic turmoil unbearable to cope with. This harsh reality of wasted life full of nostalgia with no meaning left and no one around to live for and live with , inflict such wounds that though concealed burn her soul inside . She is forced to live worth such unbearable pain in utter silence. This sense of sheer loneliness alienates her from society – the first step in the later efforts of woman to live independently.

The spirit of awakening has been ignited with the hostility of the people around her. She comes under the benign spell of colonel Mahindra, the champion of modernity. Commenting on the role of woman in traditional Indian society, Anand, comments:

"Obviously, woman in India has sometimes been exalted as Goddess, but mostly pampered as a doll or kept down and oppressed ...unlike the European woman, who began to react, against the low status that came to be assigned to her after Luther by the formulation of an ideal woman as the equal of man, complete by herself, mistress of her own sex and free to use it as she likes, to accept or to refuse motherhood, the Indian woman drifted along and became bound to man, more and more as a slave and less and less as an individual apart."? (New Delhi: Arnold Heinemann, 1973

Gauri manages to come up dry out of the deeply troubled water. She realizes a trance in her personality : A transformation of Gauri from sensitive , caring creature to a 'lost soul' voicing out the agonies of her heart in one way or the other but she fills her with an unconscious strength –probably the strength of womanhood. Like an injured lioness and wounded she-snake, she becomes fearless to combat the challenges coming in her way. She could not bear the insult of her womanhood.

She acknowledges her rightful position and sets to justify her life under the supportive guidance of her mentor Dr. Mohindra. The voice of agony becomes a call for struggle, a revolution to protect her dignity. Finding no other 'saviour' she becomes self-protective and self-involved, ignoring and discharging all her conventional duties and responsibilities towards her husband Panchi . She rejects the suppression and oppression of her in-laws family and sets to re-discover her own identity through the dense fog of hostility and humiliation of the male-world, earlier crushed and crumpled by man. She turns to life..., at the last stage of the novel; Gauri finds Panchi again worthless and useless and eventually leaves him once again. Gauri's self-assertion is the strong element that makes her an "awakened woman"

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## EYES OF THE CAVEMAN

*Dr. Kulbhushan Kaushal\**

Deep in the caves of rocks  
 For eons I had sat alone  
 In my eyes stretch the endless deserts  
 In my mind there is a wild dance  
 Of mad oceans  
 All the twinkling of the gaudy stars  
 And tender milky ways  
 Stream through my eyes

And the green of the sunshine  
 Spread on the fields numerous  
 And those dew drops  
 Dancing on the gentle lotus flowers  
 In the million ponds of the world  
 Are the relics of my memory  
 Fragmented and fractured  
 Under the gentle pressure  
 Of crimson reminiscences

And sitting alone in the cave  
 I remember the bloody fields  
 Across the continents  
 Trunks without heads  
 Faces without eyes  
 Simmering lips  
 Expressions never come to boil  
 And look- over there  
 The weeping, howling, melting beauties  
 Near the neem trees  
 Playing with pebbles  
 Shrieking on seeing a man  
 Now with their bulging eyes

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And then- with their twitched faces  
 And again, their demonic gestures  
 They seem to play with the ghosts  
 And with the witches  
 On the banks of the rivers

It'll be great to dance with the spirits  
 In the early morning  
 To greet the day with  
 Hands in hands with the ghosts  
 When you don't walk in steps  
 But in strides  
 You don't reach  
 But you stretch  
 And we feel  
 We are cursed  
 To be happy always

Sitting in the cave  
 With desert stretched in my eyes  
 I think the millions of infants  
 Learning curious languages  
 To interpret the mad dreams  
 To interpret the call of insane voice  
 And restore a pattern in the madness  
 To tame the chaos  
 And to smarten the edge

Sitting in the cave  
 I look at the strange pyramids  
 In the Arabic desert  
 And thousands of people  
 Struggling to track behind  
 The howling spirits  
 To their mummies  
 To the stretches  
 And then

The millions of stretches  
 And also the priests  
 Providing solace and balm  
 To the injured hearts  
 And broken minds

And look- those ships I saw  
 A million years back  
 They flew on the surface of the ocean  
 As if with Hammock  
 They have been fuelled  
 Their unsteady gait  
 And the staggering touch  
 And all the hurly-burly of speed  
 With tons of loads of almonds  
 Cashewnuts, gems and stones  
 And gold beyond measurement

Sitting in the cave  
 I've seen the rivers  
 Streaming through green landscapes  
 With new energies charged  
 The human infants  
 Dancing in the womb of creation  
 And moving to the mighty cross-currents  
 New volcanoes erupting  
 Sea shouting like mad  
 And the men hardly sitting at homes  
 And nude ladies, half clad men  
 Reading the Sensex graphs  
 And reports on weather  
 Ever unpredictably...

The broken idols  
 And ideals  
 Giving birth to impotent convictions  
 And unsure ascent  
 And deceptive consent

Never before sitting in the cave I saw  
 The language so ruthlessly mutilated  
 Cheeks torn, breasts sucked, vaginas defiled  
 And the hissing cobras  
 Eating all verbs  
 And the adjectives  
 Have become the monopoly of the wicked  
 And adverbs sleep safe  
 With the whipping boys  
 And dancing girls

It's all non-sense time  
 And blessed are destined  
 To make sense  
 Out of non-sense

Sitting in the cave I've seen  
 Astronomers fainting  
 To imagine the scale of the universe  
 The size of the planets  
 And the erratic movement  
 Of the horses of the sun

And who has dared to count  
 The laughing stars  
 And the galaxy of moons  
 And those predictions of the astrologers  
 Are in fact prophecies of the sages  
 Who measure and admeasure  
 Beyond the ken of the eyes  
 And the reach of the feet  
 And range of ears

There- a marriage will break  
 You'll be blessed with a son  
 And there- an amorous phase enters your life  
 Where you may reflirt with  
 The antics of skin

And sleep assured of plunder  
 And ignominy

And there- a decline of civilization  
 A slide of a mountain...  
 Making millions wonder and scream  
 This just is not possible  
 How Hiranayakashyap-  
 The mighty demon king  
 Can be brought to a threshold  
 In the twilight  
 And how a Narsimhan  
 Both a man and a lion together  
 Peers his steely fingers  
 In the tender parts of belly  
 To bring out the golden ring  
 Intoxicating his wits

Sitting in the cave  
 I've seen  
 The dance of death  
 The endless rush  
 The shrouded bodies  
 Being buried  
 And the hurried prayers being said  
 And the mean indicators  
 Of the loved ones

For reaping such a harvest  
 We sow a struggle  
 Our dogs may visit our graves every month  
 Not our sons and daughters  
 As they are busy  
 With matters of consequence

It's a season  
 Of all treasons  
 And for alternations

Read meanings in the meandering talks  
 And I see you marching  
 Backward to future  
 Back to the cave!!

## DINOSAURS

Five decades is  
 Like millions of years  
 Centuries and eons  
 The dancing dinosaurs  
 Are no more in their caves  
 With the jumping monkeys  
 On their backs  
 Parrots sitting on their ears  
 The barking crows guiding them  
 Through the thick foliage

These handsome dinosaurs  
 With their aggressive reach  
 Have devoured a million moons  
 Reluctant to faint  
 The dinosaurs- they say  
 Are made of mud  
 Mud charged with spirits  
 And insane counsels  
 With their brittle teeth  
 And stony voices

Dinosaurs dream  
 Of eating the rocks  
 Swallowing the mountains  
 The dinosaurs invade  
 Some territories sweet

Like in the moonlit nights  
 The dreams of that girl  
 The dinosaurs played

And played and played  
 With a fast train  
 Attacking the smiling children

Shivering girls, frozen adults  
 Dreaming of wild, wild markets  
 With huge water melons  
 Parrot-pecked guavas  
 Mega-oranges  
 The hunch-backed camels

All imported from  
 A clever craftsman's repository  
 For children to amuse  
 For aiding a teacher to teach

Sometimes I wonder-  
 It will be great  
 To have Dinosaur as a teaching aid  
 It will be great fun  
 To ride in the thick skin  
 Of a dinosaur's back and belly

More exciting it will be  
 To make children  
 Pull the brittle teeth  
 And make beads out of them  
 And a mala for celebrations

I have just forgotten  
 The very recent holocaust  
 A disaster in the sky  
 A disaster in the streets  
 Where in seconds  
 Real, real strip-tease  
 Was played in the streets

A maniac dance it was  
 Rush of maddening cries  
 Madhouse of mad emotions  
 Mothers remember not their children  
 Fathers stopped not  
 For a second in their homes

Those rays poisoned our words  
 Blunted our tongues  
 Gifted us faces without eyes  
 And we discovered  
 Beauty is not skin deep

We discovered  
 Horrible Hell and horrible horrors  
 We are destined to live  
 We discovered  
 Our impotence to govern  
 And to manage  
 Great civilized nations

Not dinosaurs  
 Conspired to root out  
 The walls of existence  
 It is not only  
 The First World War  
 And the second,  
 Third is in the air  
 I'll say it's on

We are bereft of grace  
 And no more are safe  
 Our mountains, our rivers  
 Our forests, our hearts  
 And the souls were never  
 As they are  
 Under God's direct care

A dangerous proposition  
 We allow invisible hands  
 To take care of matters sacred  
 The nearness  
 Makes us strangers  
 Fifty years, five hundred years  
 Five years, five eons  
 Or five minutes

Every five touches  
 Make the beauty stale  
 And five looks  
 Defile the freshness

And those dinosaurs  
 May not run faster than e-mails  
 But in their minds crumble  
 Gurgling oceans, splashing waves  
 The whirlpools of stormy winds  
 And the scattering shooting stars

We've wrongly mistaken  
 Them for dinosaurs  
 They are all horses  
 Of ashwamedha yajna  
 They are  
 Prajapati's horses ran amuck  
 Allow them to wander  
 In your streets

The dinosaurs  
 That you see in movies  
 Are no real dinosaurs  
 They are worse than puppets  
 You may call them  
 Electronic puppets  
 Dancing to the tune  
 Of a mouse manager

In their gurgling laughter  
And splashing smiles  
In their awkward walk  
And their regular talks  
There is a pattern  
Of a night  
When the sky turns to a forest  
And the stars are all dinosaurs  
With shining, bright needles  
Piercing into our minds  
And we feeling restless  
In the embrace of our paramours  
And the kisses of our children

Dinosaurs are our modern deliverers  
They alone will deliver us  
From the cage  
And liberate us from our steely frames  
Made of bones and flesh

They alone will ride us through  
Heavens, nine patalas  
And eighty-four lakh yonis  
Their aggressive beauty alone  
Will enchant the Gods  
And Goddesses will fall in love  
With Dinosaurs  
Hunt them not  
Hurt them not!!