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Editorial

The most characteristic and distinct feature of language that functions towards stability of meaning is the repetition of linguistic signs in their association with their meanings. They lose their relevance if they are not repeated. This quality of language has significant implications for literary studies. In literary studies, the repetition of, and the repeated importance given to specific approaches results in a relative stagnation. Consequently, the synchronic studies have often acquired priority over the diachronic studies to the extent of marking almost an irrelevance of the earlier perspectives marking an over emphasis on the frameworks in vogue at the present. In the contemporary studies of literature, with its marked bent towards cultural theories, one finds the repeated application of certain 'isms' based views taking the centre stage in the form of feminism, postcolonialism, new historicism, environmentalism, post modernism, new Marxism etc. Their repeated application, like the repetition of signs in language results in an understanding that allows little scope for interpretation using either diachronically valuable points of view or the ideas directed to analyze the formal features and technical aspects of a work of art or tracing the relation between the work and its author. What seems more conspicuous is the near absence of the studies concentrating on the techniques and modes applied for literary expression. It can be ascertained from the flow of articles and research papers (appearing in literary journals marking a mushroom growth due to academic compulsions) and the number of dissertations explicating literary writings using theoretical perspectives based on philosophical ideas. Most of these studies ignore to explore how their intervention impacts literary form.

However, it is not to suggest that philosophical perspectives are not to be applied for literary studies. The studies help explore multiple nuances of a work of art and add to an understanding of the world more effectively. These studies supplemented by ideas concerning aesthetic and technical aspects that enhance the artistic appeal of literary works, are hoped to bring change and freshness to the practice of literary criticism and highlight literariness in works of art.

- Editor** : **Dr. N. K. Neb**
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Contents

<p>Locating the Self in a Diasporic Space : A Study of Imtiaz Dharker's Poetry</p>	<p>Dr. Rimika Singhvi</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Mikhail Bakhtin as a Theorist of the Novel with Special Reference to "From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse."</p>	<p>Babita</p>	<p>52</p>
<p>Subverting Geopolitical Boundaries : A Reading of Ghosh's <i>In An Antique Land</i></p>	<p>Dr. Dwijen Sharma</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>Reworking <i>Mahabharata</i> in Comic Mode : A Critical Study of Selected Titles from <i>Amar Chita Katha</i></p>	<p>Tulika Kakkar</p>	<p>57</p>
<p>The Marginal 'Other' in Mahesh Dattani's <i>Seven Steps Around the Fire</i></p>	<p>Dr. Ashoo Toor</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>The People and the State in Shakespeare's <i>Julius Caesar</i></p>	<p>Gurpreet Kour</p>	<p>62</p>
<p>Shades of Death in Ionesco's <i>Amedee or How to Get Rid of It</i></p>	<p>Jatinder Kaur</p>	<p>18</p>	<p>A Stylistic Approach to Henry Miller's <i>Black Spring</i></p>	<p>Anju</p>	<p>66</p>
<p>Dreiser's Master Piece <i>Sister Carrie</i> — Different Reading Perspectives</p>	<p>Dr. Rajesh Kumar Sharma</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>An Untitled Story</p>	<p>Dr. N D Dani</p>	<p>70</p>
<p>Different Critical Approaches to Faulkner's Novel, <i>Light in August</i></p>	<p>Dr. Tasneem Vinod</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>Human Gender Relationship in the Certain Plays of Vijay Tendulkar</p>	<p>R. Nagarajan Dr. S. Rajarajan</p>	<p>75</p>
<p>Growth of Woman and Subversion of the Patriarchal Home in <i>Jane Eyre</i></p>	<p>Ranbir Kaur</p>	<p>33</p>	<p>Reconsidering Gender and the Republic in Shakespeare : A Comparative Study of <i>Macbeth</i> and <i>King Lear</i></p>	<p>Sonia</p>	<p>79</p>
<p>Feminist Concerns in Rohinton Mistry's <i>Family Matters</i></p>	<p>Preeti Deswal</p>	<p>39</p>	<p>The Death of Humanity : A Short Story</p>	<p>Puneet Soodi</p>	<p>85</p>
<p>Shashi Deshpande's 'Stone Women'-A Feministic Shift</p>	<p>Lovleen Bains</p>	<p>44</p>	<p>Tickling Pranks</p>	<p>Dr. Suresh Chandra Pande</p>	<p>88</p>
<p>Style and Narrative Technique in Coleridge's <i>The Rime of the Ancient Mariner</i></p>	<p>Dr. Surekha Ahlawat</p>	<p>48</p>	<p>A Quiet Debate</p>	<p>Dr. Suresh Chandra Pande</p>	<p>89</p>
			<p>Book Review</p>	<p>Geetanjali</p>	<p>90</p>

Locating the Self in a Diasporic Space : A Study of Imtiaz Dharker's Poetry

*Dr. Rimika Singhvi**

Imtiaz Dharker is one of the major women poets writing today who divides her time between three countries. A technically skilled poet, prize-winning documentary film-maker and an accomplished artist whose work has been exhibited widely in India and abroad, Dharker has published five collections of poetry, all of which are self-illustrated. Born in Lahore, she grew up a Muslim Calvinist in Glasgow and married a Hindu Indian. Dharker now lives between Mumbai and London. Her incessant travels across the globe and marrying outside her faith twice (she later married a Scottish national who is no more) have added to the commingling of cultures in her. In fact, both her marriages outside her own religious community constitute an important crossing of borders. Her various cultural experiences of Pakistan, England and India have opened up her mind into problematizing religion and culture, identity and belonging, as components of the self.

Dharker foregrounds the issues of alienation and freedom in much of her poetry. Having become an outsider in most of the places where she has lived, she finds that the position of "outsiderness" has contributed to her quest for a new concept of being: "Freedom is something inside you. Being able to stand outside a culture is freedom. I love being an outsider... Being an outsider is my country... That's the country all writers belong to - standing outside the body too, outside the image. Inside we are so many different things" (de Souza 114). Since Dharker's cultural experience spans more than one country, it is from this phenomenon of transitions that she draws her themes such as gender, religion, displacement, exile, identity and existential doubts. Her intensely concerned, economical poetry, in which political activity, urban violence and religious anomalies are raised in tightly-wrought free verse, is remarkable for its supple rhythmical control. Dharker is also interested in the shifting dynamics of personal relationships and the torment of an individual caught between multiple cultures and divergent world-views. Speaking at the Durham Literature Festival in 2000, Dharker is reported to have said that she enjoys the benefits of being an outcast in most societies she has known. She is not one to define herself in terms of location or religion in a world that seems to be splitting itself into narrower national and religious groups, sects, castes and sub-castes.

* Head, Department of English, The IIS University, Jaipur (Rajasthan) –

In a global cultural climate that favours monolithic cultural identities, Dharker's unabashed embracing of unsettlement as settlement clearly is not designed to curry favour with the conservatives. Her act of crossing over maybe construed as a gesture of defiance than of self-gratification.

Dharker's poetic corpus shows how she is constantly confronted with identity-formation and diasporic formulations. She takes up her diverse experiences of multiculturalism as disturbing her into thought only to be dealt with squarely. The resultant integration, after a kind of destabilization, helps her gain better insight into her core ideas. The self in Dharker's writing comes across as a bundle of parts in a state of flux. The phenomenon, as explained by David Hume, the Scottish philosopher and historian, considers man as a collection of different perceptions which succeed one another with an inconceivable rapidity and are in perpetual movement. The soul is seen as retaining its identity not by virtue of some enduring core substance but by being composed of many different, related and constantly changing elements (Hume 1739). Linking this with Dharker, it may be seen how the question of personal identity becomes a matter of characterizing the loose cohesion of her varied, frequently changing personal experiences.

Dharker's construction of the self is through experiences of displacement (at many levels) and disjunction (of ideas). Peeling off the layers of consciousness born out of gender, religion, race and nationality, she gets away from such traditional identity-labels and refuses to be pinned down by narrow, separatist categories. In questioning and then rejecting the artificially superadded layers onto herself, hers is a quest for the real, natural being within her. While being concerned with the idea of "home" and the internal differences therein, her writing looks beyond searching for ways to locate herself within the larger framework of the world. "Location" becomes her problem as well as a testing ground as she crosses geographical boundaries, finds new homes/spaces, and acquires new identities/voices. The new ideas thus formed gradually, through her experience of spaces and cultures, emerge in each of her successive poetry-collections.

High on the rush of daily displacement, the poet's voice locates home between countries, between borders, proudly flaunting her allegiance to another country, unrestricted by race, nationality or gender. Crossing borders is an important intellectual experience for her. No longer does the city come and collide with her, instead she opens her front door and goes out to meet the world on her own terms. There is an unabashed celebration of a self that strips off layers of superfluous identity with grace and abandon, to discover that it has grown larger, more generous and more

inclusive. Dharker dwells on her persona's experience of multiculturalism, which is seen as an oddity, but at the same time finds her multiple selves bound to, and co-existing peacefully with, multiple linguistic structures. She says in "Stitched" (*I speak for the devil*):

And so my mouth spoke Punjabi
while my brain heard Scots
My ears followed German
and my tongue did French. (5-8)

Another poem titled "Minority" (*Postcards from god*) talks about the woman persona feeling like a "foreigner" in a strange land on account of belonging to a racial/ethnic minority:

I was born a foreigner.
I carried on from there
to become a foreigner everywhere
I went ...
.....
I don't fit,
like a clumsily-translated poem ... (1-4, 13-14)

This sense of being in a kind of exile; of non-belonging to a fixed location and/or not fitting anywhere; of being always on the point of setting off; on the brink of departure, is the fallout of living in fragile times. The personal constructs of "home" and "away" add to the complexity and flux that a writer has to grapple with. The situation is further compounded when the self is loaded with experiences of emotional distancing and lack of communication. The speaker realizes that leaving a country is not as traumatic as walking out of a door. With the passage of time, not so much the distance, there is an acute sense of loss. For, Dharker's speaker says that distances are not just made of miles. The sense conveyed is that the poet's persona does not stop at these losses and gets over them eventually thereby strengthening the self in the process.

It is in the context of the state of the exile, the politics of memory, and the places of belonging and affiliation, that we may link Dharker's ideas to those expressed in Edward Said's well-known essay titled "Travelling Theory" (1984). Said is of the view that ideas and theories "travel" to other times and situations, from their points of origin, and undergo a process of transmutation when applied to new circumstances. We find a similar tendency in Dharker whose strong sense of multiple migrations and cultural fragmentation lets her old ideas lose their original force so that new ones may take shape. Precariously positioned at the interstices of different spaces, histories and languages, Dharker's

transnational, transcultural and multilingual leanings help her engage with issues of the self vis-à-vis location in her poetry. In fact, multivalent selves, formed as fragments of a broken geography and linguistic traces, are locked within one body as it moves through space and time. An understanding of the self is made possible through memory that induces an order into incoherent fragments from the past; into the ruptured, chaotic images of the diasporic experience. Thus, Dharker constantly operates on border zones, always looking out for connections and continuities.

An amalgamation of three cultures (British, Muslim and diasporic in-between), the poet in Dharker revels in belonging nowhere and thus being everywhere. Such living and writing on the run, opines Gayatri Spivak, gives one a further perspective on identity. However, one needs to be vigilant against "simple notions of identity which overlap neatly with language or location" (38). Dharker too is like Spivak in her approach that is "deeply suspicious of any determinist or positivist definition of identity ..." (38). The question that Dharker raises is that being in-between, what does one do with that space. Alienation and a search for home thus serve as a premise for further exploration. The experiences of being dispossessed and displaced, of migration and cultural transplantation, create a temporal and spatial distance between the poet and her material thereby adding to the creative tension. For instance, in "Inspiration" (*The terrorist at my table*), she asks for:

... railway stations.
Voices on loudspeakers,
people with their surfaces pulled away
by travelling. Movement gives me words,
carried in the carriages of trains. (7-11)

The experiences of postcoloniality and exile only add to the process of self-construction. This theme has preoccupied Dharker since her first collection of poems, *Purdah* ... in which some of the poems talk about the speaker's experience as an immigrant, of "us" and "them". There is a mood of nostalgia for the homeland; to return to one's roots, captured poignantly in "Going Home" (*Purdah* ...):

... I've tried the world
and found it wanting
tell me
how can I come home? (94-97)

"Home" or "country" has a different meaning for her; it is a territory beyond boundaries.¹⁴ It is against this background of home and homelessness, of uneasiness and anxiety, that Gaston Bachelard's

groundbreaking philosophical study *The Poetics of Space* (1970) discusses the many manifestations of “home”. A deeply symbolic space, home is both a tangible place and a place of dreams; a sanctuary as well as a space of the mind. Bachelard’s theory acknowledges how the spaces in which we live begin to consume us, affect us, and help define who we are thereby influencing our behaviour and furthering an understanding of ourselves. This makes one wonder as to what effect does *not* staying in any one place/home (or all manner of other spaces wherein human relationships can occur) for a long time have on one’s imagination and writing. In Dharker’s case, her constant engagement with the significance of space as a formative aspect of the self is similar to such a poststructuralist redefinition of space in the recent years. Whereas staying within a space can confine and suffocate, moving out of spaces can liberate. In Dharker’s poetry, both the processes are presented as she talks about the impact of inhabiting a space for some time, changing her perception, and then moving on. In doing so, she uses her emotional, ideological and cultural positions to recast, redefine and reconstitute herself. Her ideas change as she reconsiders, re-examines and responds to new experiences in “other spaces” corroborating Michel Foucault’s assertion that the present epoch will be “the epoch of space. We are in the epoch of simultaneity: ... of juxtaposition ... of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed” (22). In seeing ourselves located in and defined by a space, Foucault discusses how it takes for us the form of relations among sites. It is however his concepts of “elsewhere” and “nowhere” that allow us to make connections and see why Dharker is interested in heterotopias without geographical markers.

Dharker’s sense of rootlessness, of a flighty existence, pulls the ground away from underneath her persona’s feet. Finding herself always in transit, in a waiting space ranging from Baroda and Sialkot to Glasgow and Rome, she thinks in “Announcing the departure...” (*I speak ...*) that: ... my body is asking

to be in some promised place.
I think my body is begging
for another face. (17-20)

The reference to “another face” could mean embracing a new identity or assuming a false one. Either way, desiring a new face maybe seen as the self’s strategy to wipe out the unpleasant past in the quest for a promising future. However, the persona’s arrival in a foreign country does not necessarily give her emotional rootedness. Homesick, she is left reaching out and feeling “desperate / to seize and hold / and enter once again”.

Nevertheless, by her own admission, she manages somehow and confesses in „Stitched“ (*I speak ...*): “But I survived ...” (11).

What makes the pain of displacement lose some of its sting is the potential in goodbyes; in not clinging but becoming free of old, cumbersome ties. She experiences a high when speeding to a different time zone, heading into altered weather, landing as another person and switching from one grammar to another. There are ways of remembering that she has devised. For instance, eating out with her daughter and friends in Wembley assures her of how they are bound together by the bread they break, sharing out their continent. Taking recourse to one’s own kind of food is how even the speaker’s mother deals with homesickness in “Crab-apples” (*I speak ...*):

My mother picked crab-apples
off the Glasgow apple trees
and pounded them with chillies
to change
her homesickness
into green chutney. (1-6)

Such hybridity of food also suggests the hyphenated existence of the migrant diasporic identity. Hyphens, however, do not always separate; they also connect, resulting in new configurations, carving out fresh possibilities, and opening up new vistas for the exploration of identity and self. The sense of alienation born out of belonging to another country, not having learned their customs and ways, is therefore not seen as a negative by Dharker’s persona. On the contrary, her self-exposure is a device to dissociate herself from customs, language, people and places, and break free. Therefore, she finds safety in a ticket for it gives her the option of setting off. Having felt like a transit passenger all her life, she wants its continuation even in death. The speaker asks for her body to be burned after her death and the ashes to be scattered:

... in some country
I have never visited.
Or better still,
leave them on a train,
travelling
between. (10-15)

The prospect of her body remaining unclaimed, with no name and no nationality, and her remains thought of as lost property, does not unsettle her. In rejecting her religion and its dictates, by opting for a Hindu cremation instead of a “muslim burial”, Dharker’s persona indicates that she wants

a radical overthrow of her Muslim identity. The poem thus takes on religious, social and political connotations. Moreover, the speaker's wish for her ashes to be left on a train "travelling between" further suggests that her dead body should not be laid to rest at any one place (limited by the boundary of a grave) but returned to dust (after cremation). She would then be here, there and everywhere in death as she is in life.

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Subverting Geopolitical Boundaries : A Reading of Ghosh's *In An Antique Land*

Dr. Dwijen Sharma*

Amitav Ghosh's *In An Antique Land* (1992) is a critique of nationalism, and celebrates syncretic civilization. In this novel, Ghosh dovetails the affluent and cosmopolitan communities of the middle ages residing across the countries around the Indian Ocean with the economically and the socially restrictive Egyptian Village of the 1990s, and the hegemonic nation states of the present day with the rich cross-cultural societies of the middle ages. The novel celebrates universal humanity across cultures and civilizations; however, it does not fail in presenting how this shared bonding is threatened by the colonial interventions of the West. The significance of this is apparent in the way Ghosh has used history to bring India close to Egypt by setting up a series of exchanges at different interactive sites located across the two countries, which include mapping some of the trade routes between India and Egypt via the Mediterranean, and comparing the cosmopolitan settlements on the Malabar coast with hybrid Jewish communities in Egypt, and showing how names are cross-fertilized when they travel across nations and acquire new forms. But the quality of this interaction changes in the present time with the advent of Western hegemonic ideas, the subsequent break down of civilizations and the formation of bounded entities called nation-states. As a result, the sites of interactions among diverse cultures are lost forever, and the insurmountable gap created by mutual incomprehension is widened because of their enthusiasm for constructing distinct cultural identities.

In this paper, I would make an attempt to present how Ghosh, in/through this novel, challenges, contests and subverts geopolitical boundaries constructed by the colonizers, and how he debunks the cartographical notions of the colonisers by foregrounding—what Joel Migdal calls—"people's mental maps" (Migdal 2004:7).

In An Antique Land is an account of Amitav Ghosh's experiences as an ethnographer in the Egyptian villages of Latatifa and Nashawy. Following his discovery of a collection of letters written in Egypt in the eleventh century referring to an Indian slave, Bomma, belonging to a Jewish merchant, Abraham Ben Yiju, Ghosh attempts a historical reconstruction of a medieval world of trade and cultural exchange. This cultural space is

* Department of English North-Eastern Hill University, Tura Campus, Meghalaya

a vast, borderless region with its own hybrid languages and practices, and which exists without national or cultural boundaries.

Traders and their slaves move across this hybrid space doing business at ease. It was an amorphous 'free-trade community' (Goitein, 1967: 61). There was a free flow of goods and capital across the countries at a rapid speed; in fact, no country or community had a monopoly over the others. In a very succinct way, Janet Abu-Lughod mentioned that the medieval global economic system was more cooperative and symbiotic than conflictual: In the novel, we find Ben Yiju, who came to India in about 1132 A.D., living in the Malabar coast doing transcontinental business for nearly two decades. In the mean time, he marries a Nair woman, Ashu and begets two children by her.

In spite of being a Jew, Ben Yiju invokes God by the name of Allah, a determiner of being a part of the Arab speaking world. His relationship with his Indian slave, Bomma, who looks after his trade in the Middle East, is determined probably by the spiritual philosophy which both Muslim Sufi saints and Bhuta saint-poets of South India preach: "Perhaps the most elusive aspect of medieval slavery is its role as spiritual metaphor, as an instrument of religious imagination ... Slavery was often used as an image to represent the devotee's quest for God...searching for their master with a passion that dissolved selfhood, wealth, caste and gender." (260-61) Nevertheless, the relationship between Ben Yiju and Bomma is more than a master-slave relationship of the sixteenth century European colonial system. In the medieval world, the relationship of the master and slave was not only professional and formal but also humane and flexible: "Slavery was also often used as a means of creating fictive ties of kinship between people who were otherwise unrelated ... slaves were sometimes gradually incorporated into their master's households and came to be counted as members of their families. (260)

This "fictive ties of kinship between people who were otherwise unrelated" leads us to the question of language, which Ben Yiju probably used in his day-today dealings with people and which was probably very different from the languages of his wife, Ashu, his associates, Madmun and Khalaf, and his slave, Bomma. It necessarily entails a language which is reciprocal and acceptable to the trading community at large." Given what we know about the practices of Arab traders in other multilingual areas (like the Mediterranean of example) it seems likely that the problem was resolved by using a trading argot, or an elaborated pidgin language. . .one that was compounded largely of Perso-Arabic and north Indian elements,

and was in use amongst merchants and traders all along the coast". (281) However, this all encompassing and accommodating syncretic civilization produced by the network of trade routes crumbles under the pressure of the European military interventions.

The erosion of the "ancient trading culture" of the Indian Ocean by Portuguese commercial ambitions and military power leads to the division of this part of the world, like the rest of the globe, into singular and separated national states. As a result, the Imperial powers use these geographical locations as strategic military positions. Ghosh connects these military and commercial activities directly with the development of Orientalist scholarship: "Over the same period that Egypt was gaining a new strategic importance within the disposition of European empires, she was also gradually evolving into a new continent of riches for the Western scholarly and artistic imagination." (81)

Taking a leaf from Foucault, who states that power structures are validated and sanctioned by knowledge, Edward Said argues in *Orientalism* (1978) that the production of knowledge is not isolated from the world of practical affairs but highly depends on the political and economic processes of colonialism. For instance, the Western scholars/Orientalists ransack the "new continent of riches," particularly the Geniza attached to the synagogue of Ben Ezra in Cairo so as to re-interpret the medieval documents, which were produced in the first place by a borderless and hybrid medieval trading culture. The dispersal of such social and religious texts of the past to Europe is attributed to the covert ideology embedded in imperialism, which brought that culture to an end by the inscriptions of borders. The reinterpretation is done "in a sly allegory on the intercourse between power and the writing of history" (82). Consequently, the Western scholars discredited the indigenous knowledge system. For instance, in his interaction with an Imam, Amitav Ghosh finds out that the Imam has lost faith in the traditional knowledge systems of his ancestors, which he now regards as relics of the past. In fact, the Imam, who had learned folk remedies and herbal medicines from his ancestors, shies away from talking about them. However, he is very keen to show his knowledge and skills on Western medicine. Thrusting open a box, he shows: "Half a dozen phials and a hypodermic syringe ... this is what he had been learning for the last few years..." (192)

As a scholar, Ghosh stands in the same relation to the Imam as Schechter to the Geniza and its riches, and their feelings of shame and embarrassment are caused by their common desire to inherit the West. In

their loving engagement with the West, both Imam Ibrahim and Ghosh participate “in their [our] final defeat, in the dissolution of the centuries of dialogue that had linked [us] them” (236). This is another triumph for the West: “I felt myself a conspirator in the betrayal of the history that had led me to Nashawy; a witness to the extermination of a world of accommodations that I had believed to be still alive, and in some tiny measures, still retrievable.”(237)

Therefore, in conclusion it may be said that the modern nation-state projects differences/distinctness in its construction of culture and political boundaries. For instance, India is articulated through its technological products such as the diesel water pump known as the “Indian machine” (al-makana-al-Hind) as well as through exotic practices like cow worship, sati and cremation. Similarly, Egypt is Arab and Islamic and all signs of syncretic evidence of a long history of cultural interaction in the Middle East are reduced to either superstition or folklore. Nevertheless, the spirit of *bon camarade* persists between India and Egypt as is expressed by Ustaz Sabry: “Our countries were very similar, for India, like Egypt, was largely an agricultural nation ... Our two countries had always supported each other in the past.” (134)

Ghosh and some other Egyptians share human ties and personal bonding which transcend the borders imposed by the nation state. It is Nabeel, the young student, who by an act of the imagination intimates what it must mean for Ghosh to live as a stranger among strangers. And it is Khamees, the fellaheen, who in perfect good humour and reasonableness, diverts Ghosh from his self-recriminations after his discourse with the Imam. And above all, it is Shaikh Musa, that most faithful of men, who makes Ghosh’s second visit to Lataifa and Nashawy a true homecoming. Therefore, Ghosh says: “a world of accommodations ... still alive, and in some tiny measure still retrievable” (237). It seems only human ties and personal bonding can transcend the cultural barriers raised by nation-states. Perhaps, in personal interactions among the citizens lie Ghosh’s solutions of all hostilities among the nation-states. The search then, in Issacs’ language, is to create a “more humane humanity,”(Issacs 1975:73) which would rest on the realisation of distinctiveness and heterogeneity and which would go beyond the physical boundaries of the modern nation-state. For instance, the creation of the European Union, which transcends the boundaries erected by the nation-states, and which affronts the European nation for having fought so many wars against each other to defend or enlarge their borders, seems to validate Ghosh’s views.

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The Marginal 'Other' in Mahesh Dattani's *Seven Steps Around the Fire*

Dr. Ashoo Toor*

Sahitya Academy award winner, Mahesh Dattani's plays open a new channel in contemporary writing wherein he sheds the conservative garb and comes out brazenly and boldly into a field hitherto ignored: the marginal existence of the transsexuals in the Indian society. The play, *Seven Steps Around the Fire* acknowledges the marginality of eunuchs. Dattani in his thoughtful and creative narration attempts to articulate the voice of the 'hijras' whose identity remains unacknowledged under the hegemonic and authoritative voice of the accepted classes. While Dattani does not focus much on their political liberation; he does emphasise the psychological impact of centuries of oppression on them. Dattani, through his 'Decolonizing Theatre' deviates from the conventions of conventional morality and reconstructs the spaces for marginalized and colonized groups of the society. The play *Seven Steps Around the Fire* celebrates the true spirit of humanity. Dattani investigates the human aspect of eunuchs who are socially neglected, even humiliated for being sexually handicapped. The play mocks at the gender oriented social system where the authorial sensibility of Dattani struggles to lend a voice to the hijra community so that they may identify their oppressors and find their rightful space and share in the mainstream social circle.

In the Indian society, the community of hijras perpetually survives under the cover of shame and silence. They suffer social discrimination, social deprivation, mental torture and physical torment too. Their birth is treated as a curse of the divine and as such they are prohibited to establish personal relationships. They are deprived of the pleasures of family bliss, so much so that they are separated from their natural parents and are compelled to live in the hijra community. They are considered to add colour and vibrance to our jubilations and celebrations since times immemorial, but their human sensibilities have never been the focus of a conscious study. The extent of dismissing their rights can be gauged from the fact that they are not encouraged to pursue any professional skills. Rather, they are compelled to learn to sing and dance to earn their livelihood. A hijra wanting to shun his community is doubly endangered because the society wouldn't have him/her and the hijra community wouldn't give him/her up.

* Assistant Professor, Department of Agriculture Journalism, Languages and Literature, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana

The plot of the play, *Seven Steps Around the Fire* revolves around the mysterious murder of Kamla, a beautiful eunuch, and is being investigated in the true sense, not by the police, but by Uma Rao, a student of Sociology, pursuing her thesis on this marginalized section of the society. While the police suspect another eunuch, Anarkali, to be the murderer, Uma delves deep into the psyche of Anarkali, forms a sisterly bond with her and learns that the projected news is a lie. Wife of the DCP, she ventures out from the cozy comforts of her home and voyages to the dark alleys and forbidden lanes of the hijra community to extract the truth.

Though eunuchs are a genderless community, yet Uma insists on calling Anarkali 'she'; while her hardened police officer husband Suresh and even the constable Munswamy utter the pronoun 'it' for the hijras, in the most detestful and derogatory tones.

"Uma: Will she talk to me?"

Munswamy: It will only tell you lies" (Dattani 7).

Again, a concerned Uma wants to know, "Why do they put her in a male prison?" to which Suresh coldly replies, "They are as strong as horses ... They are all just castrated, degenerate men" (Dattani 9, 10). While the police officials are ruthless, abusive and contemptuous towards Anarkali; it is Uma and the immense human sympathy she displays that wins over Anarkali's initial defiant attitude and the latter opens up to reveal the subtle truth that Uma seeks. Dattani seems to suggest that the only possible way to lay siege to the heart of the hijra community is through love and empathy. The society with its flawed ideologies has ever failed to check the deeper recesses of the hearts of these marginalized souls. Not only are the hijras brought up with the notion that they are different from men and women, but are also discouraged to develop emotional ties beyond their community. At one point when Uma remarks: "I don't have a sister" (Dattani 12), Anarkali replies sympathetically, "Oh. If you were a hijra, I would have made you my sister" (Dattani 13). Not otherwise!

The play is replete with instances where Uma's genuine concern wins over the eunuchs, who begin to treat her with love and respect. Uma's persistent coaxing and patient manners transform Anarkali's hardened attitude and she finally leads Uma to Shivajinagar to meet the head eunuch, Champa. Uma follows the trail and unravels some more truths about Kamla's murder. She is convinced of Anarkali's innocence, so much so that she borrows a hefty sum of Rs. 50,000/- from her father and passes it on to Champa to get Anarkali released on bail. The meeting with Champa is particularly noteworthy. As Uma introduces herself as a social worker,

Champa is surprised: "You see us also as a society, no?" (Dattani 23) Champa laments that there is no society for them except the one they build for themselves. It is true that society doesn't give them the opportunity to feel the zest of life by involvement in personal relationships. As Champa adds, "She (Kamla) was my only daughter! ... You don't know how much we all loved her" (Dattani 28). The pain and anguish with which Champa utters the above statements is evidence enough as to the sensitivity of this class, whom we generally regard as being uncouth and uncivilized. Dattani underlines the fact that these gender neutralities too have a self, a dignity and a voice which are sadly crushed by the established order.

Dattani introduces Uma as the sensitive female protagonist who is bent upon exposing the corruption and dubiousness of the elite class. She discerns some discrete relation between Salim's visit to Champa's place and his demand to know about a particular photograph, and the murder of Kamla. She closely follows this connection which leads her to Minister Sharma's house, where she also chances upon Subbu, Mr. Sharma's son, whose behavior appears largely depressed and blue. The fact that Mr. Sharma tries his best to persuade Subbu to leave the room and take rest appears questionable to Uma, who is quick to sense the gaps, thereby, filling in the murder mystery of Kamla.

From an overview of the play, it becomes obvious that the psychic subjugation of the marginalized communities has far reaching consequences. The quest for love of these marginal others, their need to have their own recognised space- from the margins to the centre- has been deftly dealt with. Dattani organizes the events in the play to establish that the innate natural deficiency should not be exploited as the mechanism of subjugation. The unbridled passion for survival and personal relationship of Champa and Anarkali (my daughter, my sister) suggests that eunuchs are not marginalized by nature, but by the conventions of a man-made society. Dattani's vision needs to be saluted as he takes up cudgels on behalf of the hijras and lends them a voice. His vision that this community can be redeemed from their pain and angst simply by allowing them an entry into the centre of an average society, deserves commendable appreciation.

The play also presents the idea that just as eunuchs are not allowed to love one who is not one of them, similarly, they have no right to receive love outside their community. People like Subbu who loved Kamla, the eunuch, too have to suffer. Subbu and Kamla's secret marriage is a thorn for Mr. Sharma, the minister and father of Subbu. He gets Kamla burnt to death and Anarkali is arrested for the murder. But for the photograph of Subbu and

Kamla exchanging garlands, there is no proof of the liaison between the two. And it is this photograph which makes skeletons tumble out of the cupboard. Champa and Anarkali, though they know the truth behind Kamla's murder, opt to remain silent for fear of meeting the same end at the hands of the powerful minister. Towards the end of the play, Subbu's suicide is projected as an accident and the matter hushed up- the police and the minister cannot afford to make the truth open. The message rings out clear. Neither can the eunuchs be inducted into the mainstream 'respectable society', nor can one move out to mingle in the ranks of eunuchs.

Also, 'man', 'manliness' and 'masculinism' as recognized by the society and its flawed meanings, understandings and comprehensions is brought to the fore. The sub-plot of the personal lives of Uma and Suresh, a childless couple, strengthens the main plot of awry social ideologies. While Uma has been found to be fit for motherhood and her husband is required to see a doctor; yet, Suresh refuses point blank to do so. He is clear about his decision, "I don't think so ... I don't have to go ..." (Dattani 32). It isn't easy for a man to accept that he is not man enough to father a child. The importance and the ego attached to the status of a man is overdone in the society. While the woman can be made to live with the tag of being barren, a man doesn't dare to own up his own shortcomings- physical, in this sense.

The love life of Uma and Suresh is also under a scanner. Suresh has his say regarding the choice of night wear that Uma would wear. Suresh: Wear the purple one. Uma: I wore that last night Suresh: Again. *Silence* Suresh: Good. (Dattani 9) However, Uma's suggestion that Suresh needs to get a test for sperm count done falls on deaf ears. Thus, while a man can have his decisions and choices imposed on a woman, a woman cannot even dream her man to obey to her entreaty even when it concerns both of them. All is not well between Uma and Suresh as becomes obvious when she makes a call to her father. Uma: "I wish I could come back and live here with you ... I just might ... well, you taught me to do exactly what I want to do, and one day, I just might ... He is doing well ... I did go. There is nothing wrong with me. He needs to go for a checkup. In many ways, I am quite glad. I-I don't think I want any ... I don't know ..." (Dattani 19).

The marital angst is clearly stated. Uma drops hints what she might do- walk out on Suresh, confront him on the issue or maybe let things lie dormant. Her statement that she is glad it is not she who is barren speaks volumes about how bad the situation would have been had Uma been failing as a woman. It is easy for a man to accuse a woman, while he himself

may never look within or simply choose to look the other way when he is in the dock.

Thus, not only is the institution of marriage shaken in the contemporary scenario, gender and sex, too, become confused concepts as far as society is concerned. While Foucault suggests that sex is biological and gender is a mere available cultural category; yet, the genderless eunuchs are treated as 'this/that thing' (Dattani 16) and as such no respect is accorded to them.

Master theatre craftsman, Dattani has structured the play with a bold theme and has employed various techniques to achieve pin pointed results. Be it the rough language straight out of the hijras vocabulary or the voice-over technique, he has lent a realistic touch to the story. The brazen world of the hijras is depicted to be as rough and as harsh as their loud, coarse and unpleasant music. In the final run, Dattani can be credited with lending a voice to the marginalized 'others'- the hijras. The sympathetic sensibility that he lends to the treatment of the eunuchs essayed in the play by Anarkali, Champa and Kamla goes a long way in sensitizing the society towards the need to be humanitarian and according equal space to all, especially the hijras- the marginal others, who have practically no dignified identity in the social order. They are ostracized as they do not conform to the acceptable gender divisions made by the society. The play poses serious questions to the urbane society regarding the lack of tolerance towards the hijra community. While there is immense hue and cry about social justice, space, equality, banishing of prejudice and bringing the marginalized to the centre, a lot still remains to be done in essence.

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Shades of Death in Ionesco's *Amedee* or *How to Get Rid of It*

Jatinder Kaur*

Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
It seems to me most strange that men should fear,
Seeing that death, a necessary end,
will come, when it will come. (Sobti 13)

Every being that has come into the world is scared of death which spares none. One sees other people dying but one forgets that death will come to her/him also. It is death which discards all the explanations which one tries to give to one's existence and make it absurd. To get rid of this haunting reality of human existence, human beings try to ignore it by engaging themselves in various activities. Ancient man began worshipping all the objects which were the causes of his death. Later, he 'comes within the hold of one religion or the other' (Sobti 13). However, death is not the only fear or problem of modern men. They have witnessed "unparalleled destruction" and "the cruelest mass - killings". The problems of humanity, now, have assumed global dimensions and millions and millions still go hungry day after day. An individual experiences death in the everyday.

Death does not mean, death of body alone. It refers to the death of desires and aspirations, death of emotions, death of love- the real crisis which makes an individual's life meaningless and absurd, Ionesco's *Amedee* also experiences 'death'- death of his freedom. A person enclosed in the walls for years cannot describe the world outside and life itself- the source of all fantasy and imagination. Similarly, *Amedee*- the writer wants to write a play like his own creator- Eugene Ionesco about an Old couple. (Ionesco too has written a play, *The Chairs* which deals with an alienated Old couple.) But *Amedee* is unable to write more than two speeches: . . . The old woman says to the old man, 'Do you think it will do?' and the one I managed to write today, the one I've just read you: the old man replies, 'It won't do by itself'. (31)

Amedee, like other so called heroes of the theatre of the absurd is completely cut off from the society. When a postman tells *Amedee* about the letter which he has brought for *Amedee*, he does not believe the postman and says, "Oh no, There can't be." (47) On the other hand, Madeleine his wife tries to connect with the outer world with the help of a telephone

* Teaching Assistant, Department of Agriculture Journalism, Languages and Literature, Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana

switch-board: I shall get into a row. They'll be starting any moment now ... [A buzz from the switch board.] They've started already . . . (35)

Ionesco regards realism as "sub-realism" which "alienates man from his profound self" (Notes and Counter Notes, 196) and *Amedee* is an attack on the realistic drama. The dead suffering from an incurable disease of "geometrical progression" and the final flight of Amedee along with it undermine our common perceptions of reality. In his interview with Shusha Guppy, he said, "Dreams are reality at its most profound, and what you invent is truth because invention, by its nature, can't be a lie" (The Paris Review: The Art of Theatre No. 6). In fact, *Amedee* or *How to Get Rid of It* is dream within a dream. Amedee, while wanting for changing of a bright day into a dark night had a vision. The two figures- Madeleine II and Amedee II came out of the well of his sub-conscious mind. They were looking young and it seems that it was their wedding day. He moved towards his veiled bride. AMEDEE II: Madeleine, Madeleine! MADELEINE II: Don't come near me. Don't touch me; You sting, sting, sting. You hurt me! What do you want! Where are you going, going, going? AMEDEE II: Madeleine ... MADELEINE II: Aaaaah! Aaah! Aaah! (72)

According to Ionesco, the audience will find no trace of symbolism in *Amedee*. But the whole play itself is a symbol of broken relationships, particularly marriage. Marriage is a kind of social relationship from which modern man is completely cut off for the absence of love. In the modern world, the scared relationship of marriage has completely shattered because it is based on false ideals instead of true love. The passion called love, in the modern society is a kind of love which is shown in the movies. It is a lie which leads to "disillusionment and an unsatisfactory life" (Fuller 57) like that of Amedee and Madeleine.

AMEDEE [stammering]: I know it does! ... Love makes up for everything. MADELEINE: Don't talk rubbish! I can't see love getting rid of this dead body. Nor hate either, for that matter. It's got nothing to do with feelings. (78)

The cadaver, lying in the house, too has symbolic significance. The cadaver has been the cause of rift between Amedee and Madeleine for last fifteen years. It may be unreal and "Look, you know", says Paloma of Conrad Seiler, "most of us suffer from unreal [. . .] Unreal phobias and obsessions. That's our life." (Seiler 1-28) The cadaver is the outcome of the death of love and "mutual feeling" in the couple "that grows threateningly until it surrounds them." It may also be a metaphysical symbol of the approaching death that comes in forefront of the couple and Ionesco

himself. He confesses in "Notes on the Theatre", "I also write in order to cry out my fear of death and my humiliation at the thought of dying." (Notes and Counter Notes, 217)

It may be a symbol of the destructive influence of, both Hitler's growing power as well as the two world wars. Nazis devised an unprecedented means of killing people, that is, by gassing them in various killing centers. The 'undesirable' people were widely persecuted. They were forced to live in separately marked areas called ghettos. Ionesco's characters- Amedee and Madeleine were living in a separate house and were almost cut off from the outer world. As a matter of fact, the name of the hero of the play, i.e. Amedee Buccinioni is a Jewish name and Jews were classified as an anti-race and, therefore, were 'undesirable.' For last fifteen years, Amedee and his wife were being oppressed by the Nazis in the form of the growing cadaver.

12

Use of proliferation of things is one of the favorite devices of Ionesco to present the inner world of dreams that "springs from our non-social self" (Notes and Counter Notes 197) on the stage. Amedee murdered a person in a fit of anger or out of jealousy. This corpse causes them trouble. "Like time", says Kevin Kelly, "it keeps growing, stretching inside its death pallor until its huge feet burst right through the door and into the living room" (*The Avante-Grade of Ionesco's "Amedee"*). The problems of the couple do not end over here. The corpse, along with itself was growing poisonous mushrooms. Martin Esslin is of the view that, "As the corpse grows, mushrooms proliferate in the apartment- images of decay and corruption." (Esslin 158)

Initially, mushrooms were growing in the bedroom of the couple only- now the growth centre of the dead. They had started growing in the drawing room and became a cause of worry for Madeleine. Linda Davis Kyle is of the view that, "Amedee and Madeleine are Adam and Eve in a bomb shelter and mushrooms suggest atomic bombs." (Qtd in Cabeen 1854) The increasing number of mushrooms or unexploded bombs or bomb shells at a place makes that not worthy to be lived in. Ionesco's use of proliferation of the corpse and mushrooms, thus, represent the external forces (social, political, religious and economical) that dominate the human spirit and make the individuals helpless.

The twentieth century man has witnessed so many deaths that his faith in religion and divine power has shaken off. For some, God has hidden behind a fog of their own making. For Nietzsche, God is dead. Then, isn't it 'God' of Nietzsche who is lying dead before Amedee or is it something

within Amedee and modern men which has died in their own selves and is dying even today ? AMEDEE: There must be something in the atmosphere... MADELEINE: It doesn't sound like you at all, not like your real self! [Pointing to the body] It's his fault. It all comes from him. He must have given you the idea. It's his world, not ours. (78)

Like Rhinoceros, Amedee too was, thus written "in the shadow of World War II." In an era when life was "vanishing like a ghost," men like Amedee had "no inspiration." In fact, Amedee confesses: I've no inspiration. With all I have on my conscience . . . the life we're leading . . . it's not exactly right atmosphere. . . (30)

Attacking at the moral as well as the intellectual bankruptcy of modern "hollow men," Ionesco writes that 'two dictatorships threaten us- the passive dictatorship of routine; and active dictatorship of dogma.' (Notes and Counter Notes 231) These forces, especially, routine reduce a human being to a robot and makes life boring. The dictatorship of routine and boredom leads human beings to the desert of "emotional isolation" ("The Apotheosis of the Platitude"). This emotional isolation, says R. N. Coe, "... in Ionesco's world is nowhere more marked than in his reaction to violent death." Modern man (as our hero did) lets other people suffer and acts as a passive observer, as an "outsider" and stay inactively where he is: AMEDEE: Listen ... you know I was in the countrone day fishing ... a woman fell in the water and shouted for help. As I can't swim- and any way the fish were biting- I stayed where I was and left her to drawn... In that case I'd be charged with not helping someone whose life was in danger... That's not so serious. (64)

It's a fact that public revealing of the secrets which an individual never wants to share with any one leads to embarrassment and that person tries to fly away from that place. The same thing happens with the hero of the play, Amedee after coming in open and in contact with other people especially with policemen or the people who represent authority and his secret sin comes into the light. Then, ' suddenly a surprising thing happens'. The corpse which has earlier coiled round Amedee seems to have opened out like a sail or a huge parachute. R. C. Lamont is of the view that "The body, however, suffered an astonishing metamorphosis: it has become weightless. Winding itself around Amédée's body, like an umbilical cord, it buoys it up Amédée's rise and soon he flies up out of reach of every one and, the husband- Amedee is freed by the dead past itself.

However, in the face of death, everything - religion, society, power, conventions, and various institutions of society meant for human progress-

family and even life itself becomes futile for a man who is cut off from his roots. He suffers like the spirits of 'vestibule' who are easily blown away in the direction of a 'whirlwind' that blows. Amedee, too, flew away with the dead because its pull was stronger than his earthly bonds. Though Amedee claims, he is being carried off involuntarily; there is a lightness of spirit and euphoric excitement about the conclusion. His disappearance is signaled by brilliant lights, comets and shooting stars. He is deaf to his wife's plea that he can return home. Amedee escapes from his stifling home and from the gravitational pull of death ridden earth.

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Dreiser's Master Piece *Sister Carrie* — Different Reading Perspectives

Dr. Rajesh Kumar Sharma*

When the novel *Sister Carrie* was published in the year 1900, it met with a strong disapproval in the initial stages of its publication from the American reading public. The American readership could not understand Theodore Dreiser's radical social perspectives. It is worthwhile to compare this resistance to a similar reception that Flaubert's *Madame Bovare* received in France in 1857. It is interesting to note what critic Hans Robert Jauss has to say in his book *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, as he points out that in 1857, the year of publication of *Madame Bovare* and another novel Feydeau's *Fanny* had dealt with the same theme of infidelity in provincial bourgeois society. It is rather amusing to note that *Fanny* went for ten printings in a year followed by thirteen editions in next thirty years; on the contrary *Madame Bovare* took several years to capture the imagination of French readership. One of the reasons for the difference in reception, (according to Jauss) could be traced back "to the question of the effect of their narrative form" (*Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* 27). Jauss's discussion of the difference between the two novels enables us to understand the nature of the problem which was encountered by the American readers in *Sister Carrie*. The wife of Doubleday outrightly rejected the novel on the basis of its immorality and vulgarity. But the Toledo Blade reported that the book "is a faithful portraiture of the conditions it represents, showing how the tangle of human life is knotted thread by thread" but that it was "too realistic, too somber to be altogether pleasing" (*Journal of American Studies*. Vol. 3, No. 1 1969. 123–133). It goes without saying that there was something radical about Dreiser's treatment of man-women relationship. The tradition in American fiction could be labeled as a genteel one. Such a tradition had 'regulatory conventions and taboos' which Dreiser had ignored (*My life with Dreiser* 471). But with the passage of time, Dreiser's novels received accolades from the reading public as they began to raise questions regarding the dichotomies between free will and determinism and self and the world which Dreiser dealt in great detail in his novels.

The form of the novel is spatial one, small wonder it interprets human lives in relation to their social locations. Dreiser is capable of communicating

* Assistant Professor, Department of English, Sikh National College Banga, SBS Nagar, (Pb)

a sense of solid reality through the novel. One prime reason for its remaining a classic is that it is captured in the social reality of America towards the end of nineteenth century. Critical Appraisals cited the novel's realistic depiction of the human conditions. A 1901 review in *The Academy* said that *Sister Carrie* was "absolutely free from the slightest trace of sentimentality or pettiness, and dominated everywhere by a serious and strenuous desire for truth" (*The Critical Reception* 1972, Wikipedia). This is not to deny Dreiser's clumsiness of expression which rears its ugly head in the different sections of the novel. Dreiser has succeeded admirably in evoking the inner contradictions of rapidly changing society, where everything from man's concept of nature to man- woman relationship is seen in a continual state of flux. Sensitive reader inhales a sense of compassion and sympathy in his depiction of low life. It is this aspect which sets him apart from other realists of his contemporary age. Many people were attracted to the sordid and the grotesque elements in low life unlike Dreiser. The reasons which attracted many people to such a kind of life could be ascribed to their sense of adventurism or sometimes to an act of rebellion against the class they were born in. Dreiser examines the contents of human lives with unmistakably infallible sensitivity and lays bare the delusive quality of their make- believe world and pursuits that are utterly materialistic. It goes to his credit that he examines all the things with a clinical precision. The authorial voice makes its presence felt everywhere and it is this voice which unifies the narrative to a considerable degree. It is necessary to examine one or two sentences in the early section of the book to show the impact of the authorial voice: Here was a type of the travelling canvasser for manufacturing house—a class which at that time was first being dubbed by the slang of day "drummers". Before following her in a round of seeking, let us look at the sphere in which her future was to lie. (*Sister Carrie* 19)

A close examination of the two sentences indicates an abrupt shift in a particular context in the narrative when an event or a person that is concretely localized, is suddenly presented as an indivisible part of macro-reality. Dreiser makes us always aware that he is dealing with larger dimension of the society and politics that are narrated in the daily course of the event as we go on reading about Minnie's dilemma both as a sister and as a wife. We are suddenly made conscious of the larger compulsions of low middle class circumstances. It is admirable that Dreiser embodies the point of view of *Sister Carrie* in the way he describes her feelings and thoughts as he goes on detailing Minnie's response to Carrie's arrival in Chicago. We learn about her husband's materialistic point-of-view in the

attitude of work. She linked every work pavement. In this way Dreiser was able to lay bare Minnie's sense of insecurity as a dependent which most dependent housewives displayed. So in a very curious manner Dreiser is able to show the equation between the human relationship and the macro-world in which politics and power ruled the roost.

As Dreiser proceeds with his narration, he begins to identify with his characters to such a degree that his narrative voice merges with the voice of his character. When Carrie is at the point of reaching Chicago, she has excitement written all over. We find some autobiographical echoes which matches with emotions that Dreiser felt on his first arrival in Chicago:

To the child, genius with imagination, all the wholly untraveled approach to a great city for the first time is a wonderful thing. Particularly if it be evening—that mystic period between glare and gloom of the world when life changes from one sphere or condition to another. Ah, the promise of the night. What does it not hold for the weary (*Sister Cary* 13). The suppressed excitement of Caroline is graphically presented as she walks through New York: Coaches were numerous, pedestrian many, and in Fiftieth and Nine street and blaze of lights from several new hotels which bordered the Plaza square gave an inkling of hotel life. Fifth Avenue, the home of the wealthy was noticeably crowded with carriages and gentlemen in evening dress (*Sister Carrie* 296). We feel the freshness of these descriptions in each line of the passage, more particularly because it is seen from the perspective of the lower class. The novelist's point-of-view questions the nature of reality it depicts. The novel *Sister Carrie* has a spatial form. This implies that it requires not only the location and space but also the identification of time. Most of the novelists of nineteenth century use the biographical framework of time and Dreiser is a no exception. It is not difficult to discover certain elements of bildungsroman or the novel of education which became popular during the 19th century. Dickens *Great Expectation* was a case in point. The story of the novel spans eight years. In August 1889, when Carrie leaves Colombia for Chicago, she is 18 years old and the novel which is polyphonic and open ended draws to its finale when Carrie is 26. Dreiser had initially toyed with the chronology of 1894 but later decided that 1884 would be more appropriate for reasons more than one: it was closer to his first impressions of Chicago as reporter and to his sister's affair with her architect lover. When Dreiser wrote the New York section of the novel, he changed the date 1889 so that it would correspond greatly to his experience of New York life from the middle of 1890's. Dreiser finally settled for 1889 for revising the typescript. We see

the appropriateness of the dates from the chapters on New York. The city of Chicago with its horse, cars, newly developed department stores and theatrical performances is essentially the Chicago of mid 1880's. The spatial and the temporal aspects of the social reality are never in doubt because Dreiser's novel is structured around two cities in an admirable manner.

Dreiser's use of the factual elements certainly merits mention and the manner in which he does this he deserves kudos. Perceptive readers have familiarized themselves with novels such as *The Armies of the Night* in which the novelist has recreated the contemporary history through fiction. Dreiser's experience as a journalist taught him how to report facts but in *Sister Carrie* Dreiser did not make a valiant attempt to report facts. Dreiser's vision is capable of including the profound problem of order in real life. It is rather surprising that his narrative art does neither imitate nor recreate the disorder prevalent in life. Dreiser employs various artistic means to examine the disorder prevalent at the very centre of American society. Charles Townsend Ludington, Jr. in his article "The Novelist as Social Historian" published in *Indian Journal of American Studies* opines that *Sister Carrie* exemplifies this aspect of the modern situation:

For Dreiser, any sense is personal, is an understanding of why things fall apart and this is comprehended as best as through a glass, darkly, so at the end of his novel *Sister Carrie* sits alone, dreaming by her window and rocking. In some way, Dreiser is the most modern of these works, "the tangle of human life overwhelms the possibility of the order. *Sister Carrie* is not a non-fictional novel, still the more we know of Dreiser's life more we realize that the book is at one level a chronicle of family history as well as social condition, it is a social novel but political as well because it engages the issues that were and are the very basis of the political controversy (*Indian Journal of American Studies* 1982: 58). Dreiser employs an amusing mode in chronicling political history and he does this by depicting relationship. History does not exist objectively with an identifiable order. In history several attitudes and aspirations animate identities and personal relationship. Dreiser was of the opinion that the reality very much like history could look altogether different if it were situated differently. It is the inner nature of the reality which Dreiser explores through his art in *Sister Carrie*.

In taking into cognizance the structure of the novel, it is necessary to examine the ending. One cannot underestimate the ending of *Sister Carrie* which is of great significance. In this way, we are reminded of the ending of Henry James' *The Portrait of the Lady* which is open ended. *Sister Carrie*

ends with a remarkable passage: It is when the feet weary and hope seems vain that the heartaches and the longings arise. Know, then, that for you is neither surfeit nor content. In your rocking chair by your window dreaming shall you dream such happiness as you may never feel (*Sister Carrie* 465).

It being an open-ended novel, nothing is concluded. Carrie looks at this point of the novel at her contingency. She gazes at her future which is highly unpredictable in as much as her yearnings. The rocking chair draws an arch to signify an incomplete circle in her life. The arch authentically signifies her movement from Colombia to Chicago and thence from Chicago to New York. *Sister Carrie* may be looked upon as a modernist novel on account of the vision of the contingency which is inherent in life. Diehard fans of DH Lawrence and Virginia Woolf may do well to remember that Lawrence in *Women in Love* and Virginia Woolf in *Mrs. Dalloway* do not finish the action. On the contrary they keep the action suspended in the middle of the sentence. Carrie does not find either surfeit or contentment. She remains a detainee of her desire and it is not at all surprising that most of her desires are bread by the unreal nature of her surroundings. Dreiser is able to achieve a moment of introspection for the nation of America through the character of Carrie. Her self is continually tossed between the inner and the outer world and she always feels insecure as an individual. Dreiser keeps the ending of this novel inconclusive and in doing so he discovers both contingency and vulnerability that is at the core of this novel.

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Different Critical Approaches to Faulkner's Novel, *Light in August*

Dr. Tasneem Vinod*

Different critics have taken considerable pains to point out how Faulkner's technique serves his theme in the novel. Some of these eminent critics are M.M. Bakhtin, John Basset, Irwing Howe, Lee Clinton Jenkins, Somdatta Mandal, Raman Selden, Olga W. Vickery and David Williams. The plots about Joe Christmas, Lena Grove, Gail Hightower are treated separately but they all testify to man's isolation in the universe. It is surprising to see Joe Christmas and Joanne Burden colliding against each other but not communicating at all. Each character remains confined in his world of the self which is undoubtedly traumatic. The minor characters, Doc Hines, Mc Eachern and Percy Grimm also suffer the same kind of fate that befalls the major characters. Faulkner does not bring about the meeting of Joe and Lena and in doing so, he emphasizes the theme of alienation and frustration. Faulkner shows Joe's agony being pitted against the serene temperament of Lena.

Faulkner uses different points of view to narrate the story. These different points of view suggest that it is well nigh impossible to comprehend such a wide range of experience for any single individual. Faulkner keeps on switching gears throughout the novel. He takes us from Lena's intuitive mind to Joe's inner mind and then to the detachment of Hightower which is highly agonized. As the reader's mind moves with the progression of the plot, he begins to appreciate the nature of omniscience which is necessary to understand at the one and the same time the strength and weakness of man.

There are several critics who read in the story of Joe Christmas an ironic parallel to the New Testament description of Jesus Christ. Joe keeps on wondering in his early childhood and he gradually proceeds towards crucifixion during the final seven days of his life. This can be seen as an analogy to the life of Christ. But the irony is that Joe cannot be looked as a saviour. Christ was seen as a saviour of mankind, unfortunately Joe is not capable of saving his soul nor the spirit of any individual. Edmond Volpe in *A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner* is point devise when he says Joe alone finds relief from the racist society which ultimately crucifies him: 'the fear and guilt of its society ... are reinforced ... and the concept will

* Principal, Bal Jyoti Public School, Lal Kuan, G.T. Road , Ghaziabad

be imposed during childhood, for the heirs of the executioners and made these victims, in their turn executioners' (*A Reader's Guide to William Faulkner* 48) It is impossible for Joe to save the people of the south from its puritanical mentality. He is destined to suffer torment for a tormented people, irrespective of their colour, black or white.

The dualism of order and disorder, art and reality always occupied the mind of Faulkner. By creating the Yoknapatawpha country of his imagination he tried to impose a kind of order on contemporary history which had futility and anarchy written all over. The fictitious Yoknapatawpha became a functional community like Thomas Hardy's Wessex or R.K. Narayan's Malgudi. It is through the Yoknapatawpha country Faulkner was able to present the different processes of historical changes and the passions, agonies and penances of a large variety of men and women. By creating the Yoknapatawpha country Faulkner could deal with the world on his own terms.

Faulkner is able to explore the polyvalent significance of self, history and art in the modern world by his fiction 'Light in August'. In Bakhtin's epithets it is 'a polyphonic novel' as it views reality as multiple in nature. Different versions of reality from different points of view are brought home to us through the multiple discourses in the novel. Faulkner does not present a fictional rendering of objective reality in the novel. On the contrary he tries to establish a dialogical contact between the subjective reality and the objective reality through his discourse. Faulkner's method goes against the unity of a work of art.

The definitiveness of authorial omniscience is broken down by the multiple voices. In this way the fluidity of experiential reality is also asserted. It is the dialectic of motion and stasis which Faulkner employs in the novel. He categorically states, "the aim of every artist is to arrest motion which is life and hold it fixed so that 100 years later when a stranger looks at it, it moves again since it is life" (*Lion in the Garden: Interviews with William Faulkner* 253). Manisha Mukhopadhyay also expatiates that the method of arresting motion is adopted in the cinematographic technique: *The dialectic of dynamism and inertia is the governing artistic principle of the novel, embodied by the central image of the novel, that of the road with which the novel begins and ends; the road that Christmas travels in circles and the road that stretches out before Lena in an uncomplicated linearity; the road through which Percy Grimm pursues Christmas.* (*William Faulkner: A Centennial Tribute* 131)

Light in August can also be examined from the psychoanalytical and feminist approaches. The French feminists have been greatly influenced by psychoanalysis mainly by the theories of Freud and later by the theories of Lacan. Initially French feminists were hostile towards the theories advanced by Freud but they were able to overcome their hostility towards Freud after going through the theories of Lacan who reworked the theories of Freud. In the United States Freud's theories had been reduced to a crude biological level. "According to Freud, 'Penis-envy is universal in women and is responsible for their castration complex', which results in their regarding themselves as *hommes manques* rather than a positive sex in their own right." (*A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory* 146).

Ernest Jones used the term 'phallogocentric' to define the theory of Freud. Feminists, while discussing male domination in general use the term phallogocentric. Feminists reacted bitterly to Freud's view of women as passive and penis-envying creatures. They asserted that a woman is a woman in her own right in as much as a man is a man in his own right.

Lena Grove is a crystal clear example of a passive woman badly exploited by Lucas Burch. Lena has implicit faith on Lucas. Lucas jilts her but she covers the long distance between Alabama and Jefferson. Despite the shocking betrayal, she never utters a word of reproach against him. Her innocence, dedication and passivity are sterling qualities which have been extolled by the novelist. She never loses her trust in Lucas Burch howsoever indifferent he may be. According to the feminist theorists, this is a case of phallogocentrism in which the man takes the woman for granted and mocks at her innocence and goodness.

The soul example of the penis-envying women is Joanne Burden. Her father, Nathaniel Burden makes her harbour the notion that there is a big gulf of difference between the whites and the blacks. She learned to see them "not as people but as a thing, a shadow in which I lived, we lived, all white people, all other people. I thought of all the children coming forever and ever into the world white, with a black shadow already falling upon them before they drew breath. And I seemed to see the black shadow in the shape of a cross." (*Light in August* 221)

Miss Burden thinks of herself as a martyr to the 'black cross' she is a Northern woman carrying the burden of the cross. The conflict between the female in her and her intellectual heritage makes her a dual personality. Her identification of sex with sin and sexual superstitions associated with the Negro make her feel that "she is not having intercourse with a man but with an image of her own creation, with the idea of Negro for which she

has given up her life accordingly, she emerges from the affair with her instincts once more crystallized and intensified". (*The Novels of William Faulkner: A Critical Interpretation* 76) It is a white-woman's burden complex which Joe Christmas finds intolerable. With her dominating and domineering ways, she is diametrically opposite to Lena. Faulkner's feminist ideas were reflected in the theories of the American feminist, Kate Millet. In *Sexual Politics* (1969) she argued that the patriarchal authority has given woman the minority status that inflicts on her "self-hatred and self-deception, contempt both for herself and her fellows." (*Sexual Politics* 55).

Joanne Burden has plans for the future of Joe Christmas but Christmas does not fit in with these plans in any way. In the end the two self-willed people are at dagger's drawn against each other Joanne with an old revolver and Christmas with a knife. Christmas murders her and this murderess act sets off a chain of events culminating in the tragic death of Joe Christmas and his futile search for identity prior to his death. Faulkner used the Biblical framework in *The Sound and the Fury* remarkably. The first four sections of *The Sound and the Fury* were narrated by four people Caddy, Quentin, Jason and Benjy from their different points of views. All those four points of view were patterned on the four Gospels. Faulkner uses a Biblical framework in *Light in August* with brilliant *tour de force*, evinced in the crystal logical framework: *Christmas rise Light and The Player*.

Christ crucifixion and death did not herald the death of the world. On the contrary, it indicated 'the light of the world', the light that promised eternal light. It was evident in Jesus Christ's final assertion; *I am the Resurrection and the Life*. In Faulkner's novel, *Light in August* Joe Christmas was killed on the black cross but the light emanated from the child of Lena in Jefferson. Jesus was certain of his death but he braved death as boldly as possible. In the same vein, Christmas was certain of his death and he gradually moved towards his doom. When a reader analysed both the cases of Jesus Christ and Joe Christmas, he found that it was 'The Player' or the 'Supreme Power' that moved them to their doom. Faulkner depicts the manhunt after Joe Christmas in the novel. He uses the epithets 'The Player' to drive home the religious significance of his novel. The word 'The Player' stands for the inexorable force that goads everybody and everything including Christmas and the man who finally executes him. On the contrary, characters such as Percy Grimm, Gail Hightower, the holy man all play their roles in the birth of the 'Light in August' or to put it plainly, the child of Lena these characters could be

likened to the wise men of the East (*The Magi*) when 'the light of the world was born' and John the Baptist baptized Jesus Christ after his forty day's journey in the wilderness. Gail Hightower was instrumental in the death of his wife but in the course of the birth of the child of Lena he gained self-knowledge: "If I am the instrument of her despair and death, than I am in turn instrument of someone outside myself" (*Light in August* 465)

It is a child of Lena who is justifiably nomenclatured 'Light in August' as she is symbolic of the continuity of life. The birth of this child is set in relation to the dark background of the violent death of Joe Christmas and the abrupt flight of Lucas Birch. Lucas Birch can be likened to Judas, the arch betrayer of Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Lucas Birch betrays his friend Joe Christmas for the reward announced in as much as Judas. Faulkner attaches a lot of significance to the word *rise* when he describes the death of Joe Christmas by lynching. The reader can clearly read the allusion to the ascension of Jesus in Faulkner's use of the word *rise*. The child makes a brief appearance in the novel but his symbolic importance cannot be underestimated because he provides the emotional balm to several characters in the novel who are alienated. Manisha Mukhopadhyay is not far from the truth when she comments in her *A Centennial Tribute: Mrs. Hines* perceives him as an incarnation of Joe, he further parallels Joe in his status as a potential Christ-figure with Byron as surrogate father, his family is an image of the holy family of Christ. Hightower too views him as his link with posterity" (*William Faulkner: A Centennial Tribute* 129)

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Growth of Woman and Subversion of the Patriarchal Home in Jane Eyre

Ranbir Kaur*

Writing during an era when “women were increasingly confined to the home, and gender roles were insistently codified” (Heiland 3), the Brontë used her writing to voice her rebellion. Working in the relatively new and still suspect form of novel writing, the Brontë wrote to a primarily middle-class, female audience. In writing *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte was able to critique the concepts of “home” and the domestic which were present in her novel. At the same time, she did not allow for her characters to become stereotyped, or for her female protagonists to become “professional victims.”

Charlotte adapted the style of the Female Gothic to create what Robert Heilman terms the “New” Gothic in which the characters no longer function just as abstract symbols, but as actual people. Their subjective emotions constitute the symbolic. This shift of focus from symbolic characters to symbolic emotions is best seen in the Brontë’s new portrayal of the conventional Gothic heroine. Heilman cites that the heroine of the “New” Gothic shows, violent devotedness that has in it at once a fire of independence, a spiritual energy, a vivid sexual responsiveness, and, along with this, self-righteousness, a sense of power, sometimes self-pity and envious competitiveness. To an extent the heroines are ‘un heroined,’ unsweetened. Into them there has come a new sense of the dark side of feeling and personality (166). Through this new characterization and definition of the Gothic heroine, the Brontë makes her first steps toward adapting the Gothic genre in order to make a new statement about and against patriarchy.

In traditional Gothic plots, although main female characters do appear, “the narrative is shaped by the mystery the male presents and not by the drama of the supposed protagonist, the Gothic heroine” (Massé 679). Heroines of the Gothic are instead passive characters, victims of circumstance and the corruption surrounding them. Early Gothic heroines were created to be submissive, morally flawless, and innocent. So innocent, in fact, that they often have no knowledge of evil, passion, or sexuality. They’re most representative of “Eves before the fall” (Conger 95). These heroines reflect the ideals of the era in which they were created, to exemplify the socially acceptable definition of the “good” woman. Their

relationship to the Gothic plot was to serve as the embodiment of the manners and mores of Victorian society. The heroines eventually fall victim to the advances of the “evil” antagonists, who represent the corruption of social expectations.

In *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte Brontë creates a non-traditional heroine. Introducing her heroine as a child, Charlotte shows that young Jane, shows sparks of independence. Suppressed by the tyrannical treatment of Mrs. Reed and her children, she breaks into fits of “rage,” which are her instinctual reactions to being denied freedom. It’s in this rage where she finds the most freedom, as in her confrontation with Mrs. Reed. After condemning her for unjust treatment, Jane notes, “my soul began to expand, to exult, with the strangest sense of freedom, of triumph, I ever felt. It seemed as if an invisible bond had burst, and that I had struggled out into un hoped-for liberty” (48). Jane’s hunger for freedom parallels that of the femme fatale, but Brontë is showing that heroines can also pursue independence, and take an active role in their stories. Likewise, Brontë is demonstrating that the desire for independence in women is not “evil,” but human and natural.

What separates Jane most from her predecessors, though, is her introspection. In traditional Gothic fiction, the heroine was placed in a conflict, and the situation was always external. In her passivity she was a character of consequence, affected by her surroundings, not by anything within herself. Charlotte’s new heroine, on the other hand, must face the conflicts that reside in her own mind. This further subverts the previous definition of the Gothic heroine, as well as the definition of femininity. Because the heroine has the ability to have internal conflicts, it “increases the psychological complexity of the Gothic heroine, [and] broadens immeasurably the bounds within which femininity may move” (Conger 100). However, though facing internal conflicts, these conflicts arise from the heroines’ struggle against the external world. The similarity that Jane share with earlier Gothic heroines is that the terror they are subjected to is a form of knowledge or discovery. Thrust into the adult reality of Thrush cross Grange and Lowood school, the girls learn that their youthful independence is not tolerated or valued. Female characters in early Gothic novels discovered in their adulthood the knowledge of evil and immorality. Jane discover in her adolescence the terror of a world where she has no power or control: patriarchal society.

Charlotte Brontë, in writing *Jane Eyre*, decided that her Gothic heroine should suffer from a crisis of identity. Brontë presents young Jane Eyre

* Research Scholar, Department of English, Jammu University, Jammu

as an orphan tyrannized by her aunt, Mrs. Reed, and her children, Eliza, John, and Georgiana. Continually tormented by John Reed, she describes him as a “tyrant” and “slave-driver.” In this way Jane is placed in the racialized position of slave, associating her early on with Bertha, whose mother was a Creole living in Jamaica. By using the analogy to slavery, Brontë is associating enslavement based upon race to the oppression of women, based upon gender. It is significant that the abusive character of John Reed is assumed to be the future patriarch of Gateshead, as he reminds Jane, “all the house belongs to me, or will do in a few years” (23). Until that point, Mrs. Reed assumes charge of the household and bestows her love and care only on her own children, the proper patriarchal line of descent. Enraged by the abuse she is subjected to by this “proper” family, Jane’s anger is her instinctual reaction to her entrapment at Gateshead. Young Jane is consistently referred to in animalistic language, such as “rat” and “toad,” to emphasize that her actions are instinctual and natural. Likewise, this also highlights the idea of the subconscious, since after her fight with John Reed she submits, “I was a trifle beside myself; or rather out of myself” (24)

Jane’s initial introduction to Lowood is through its representative and owner, Mr. Brocklehurst. Upon meeting him, she describes his appearance in phallic terms, observing him as “a black pillar... the straight, narrow, sable-clad shape standing erect on the rug: the grim face at the top was like a carved mask, placed above the shaft by way of capital” (42). Brocklehurst, as another symbol of patriarchy, is rich and influential, and appropriately the master of a school which teaches young girls conformity and submission. At this cold new home Jane is forced to learn how to suppress the anger and rage inherent in her behaviour at Gateshead, just as all women are expected to hide any emotions subversive to society. Original nature is to be covered up, as Brocklehurst explains when he is told that one of the girls’ hair is naturally curly, contrary to his dress code: “Naturally! Yes, but we are not to conform to nature” (73). At Lowood, Jane is exposed to two models of femininity in the characters of Miss Temple and Helen Burns. As the “angel of the house,” Miss Temple is the paradigmatic example of ladylike virtues.

Brontë’s reformed the traditional heroine into becoming a more complex and ambiguous being, she also made her heroes into complicated characters, showing characteristics of both the male monster and the faultless hero. Charlotte Brontë, in writing *Jane Eyre*, also chose to create a new kind of Gothic hero to accompany her non-traditional heroine. Brontë

20

used the motif of the Byronic hero to create Edward Rochester, who is likewise moody, cynical, and introspective. In addition, Rochester serves as a figure of attraction and repulsion, Byronic in his self-consciousness. The first appearance of Rochester is infused with Romanticized imagery, including a powerful description by Jane comparing his horse to a Gytrash. These images suggest male power and dominance; however, she quickly realizes he is human when he and his horse fall on the ice. Jane remains firm in her offers to help him, and he concedes, admitting “necessity compels me to make you useful” (122). This action dually humbles Rochester into needing the help of a woman, while it empowers Jane, who notes, “My help had been needed and claimed; I had given it; I was pleased to have done something; trivial, transitory though the deed was, it was yet an active thing, and I was weary of an existence all passive” (122). So, although the status of their relationship is that of master and servant, they also begin somewhat as equals, with a more balanced power between them.

Rochester may appear monstrous, but he “is not a real monster, and Brontë did not intend him to remain unredeemed, despite his physical (and, intermittently, moral) ‘monstrousness’” (Demoor 175). Instead, the true role of male monster is cast on John Reed, Brocklehurst, and St John Rivers. Physically, John Reed and Brocklehurst meet the description of a monstrous human being. Jane’s account of John describes him as “large and stout for his age, with a dingy and unwholesome skin” (22). Brocklehurst’s appearance is also macabre, as young Jane exclaims, “what a great nose! And what a mouth! And what large prominent teeth!” (43). Their treatment of the heroine is likewise monstrous, as John Reed bullies young Jane so that she reveals “There were moments when I was bewildered by the terror he inspired; because I had no appeal whatever against either his menaces or his inflictions” (22). She likewise remains powerless against the abuses that Brocklehurst’s school, Lowood, inflicts on her, starving her and the other students into proper submission.

In *Jane Eyre*, the home containing locked room and confining spaces are reminiscent of the Gothic tradition’s preoccupation with the failed home. Having lost its “prelapsarian purity,” the failed home locks in the “innocent” females, as result of the villain’s disruption of proper societal order (Ellis ix). On the pages of the Brontës’ novels, however, this lost “purity” finds itself in the houses that uphold this order, such as Thrushcross Grange and Gateshead. Their criticism is that the patriarchal homes are the true “sites of terror,” disrupting nature and the “prelapsarian,” or original, state of things. Instead, they argue it is in nature, the Garden of Eden, where

both the heroines and heroes are able to live in equality and peace. Adopting another convention of the Gothic, the Brontës show this idea through their description and version of the sublime.

Jane Eyre seems in danger of repeating the Gothic's tradition of ambiguous ending. At the conclusion of *Jane Eyre*, Jane has returned to a blinded Mr. Rochester, whose disability and loss of wealth now makes him dependent on her. Paralleling the plots of early Gothic novels, Jane and Rochester are married. This marriage, on the other hand, is one of equality, with the patriarchal differences that had stood between them now erased. Their new manor, Ferndean, reflects the natural freedom associated with their relationship, residing in nature away from societal expectations. Gilbert and Gubar, however, suggest that "the physical isolation of the lovers suggests their spiritual isolation in a world where such egalitarian marriages as theirs are rare, if not impossible" (369). They add that such seclusion suggests Brontë herself was unable clearly to envision viable solutions to the problem of patriarchal oppression...perhaps because no one of her contemporaries, not even a Wollstonecraft or a Mill, could adequately describe a society so drastically altered that the matured Jane and Rochester could really live in it. (369-70)

Some critics suggest that because of the inconclusive endings of Gothic fiction, it is secondary to Romantic writing. On the other hand, it seems that Gothic writers, including Charlotte Brontë, make their arguments most vividly without relying solely on imagination. The Brontë's Gothic fiction emphasizes the horror of female oppression that is in existence in the actual world. By not annihilating the existence of this trauma in the conclusion of her novels, they're further emphasizing that in reality the trauma still stands. There is no solution in the final pages of *Jane Eyre*, because no solution is present in actuality. Instead, Charlotte is pointing out that freedom from oppression cannot be achieved for either the characters in her story or her readers until the system of patriarchal control is abandoned.

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Feminist Concerns in Rohinton Mistry's *Family Matters*

Preeti Deswal*

From the feminist point of view, it is significant that out of all the four novels, from *Such a Long Journey* (1991) to *The Scream* (2006) written by Rohinton Mistry, there is only one novel endowed with a female protagonist that can be called memorable. Women are denied their rightful place in the socio-economic spheres. Small wonder, they are excluded from the centres of power. With the sole exception of the self-willed independent woman, Dina Dalal in *A Fine Balance* other women remain like sub-alterns in his novels. Mistry as a writer has never fought shy of speaking against the established order to uphold the freedom and dignity of the individual. But his concept of the autonomous individual seems to exclude the autonomous female.

In *Family Matters*, Mistry contrasts the roles of the male members with that of the female members. The male members fritter away their energies in recollecting the glorious past whereas the women folk try to strengthen family bonds, engage themselves in religious rituals and provide the succour needed in the society. Whether Mistry had this feminist aspect in his mind or not while contemplating on the principal design of the plot, suffice it to say that he felt the need for it with the progress of the plot. With his eyes wide open, he saw society at the point of decline with all its degenerating values. In such a declining society, he felt the genuine need for the sustaining role of women.

Many readers of Mistry's earlier novels have reason to believe that Mistry was either insensitive towards women or he lacked genuine sympathy. By creating the character of Roxana, he dispensed with the jitters of many of his readers. This tender, caring and loving wife of Yezad Chenoy is also the affectionate mother of two children, Jehangir and Murad. Her step brothers, Jal and Coomy live with her father, Nariman, in an apartment in the spacious *Chateau Felicity*. Nariman had been officiously generous in bequeathing the apartment to his stepsons, a decision which he regretted greatly in life. Roxana lives with her husband and two sons in a newer apartment, *Pleasant Villa* which her father purchased for her.

The novelist presents the past and the present of Roxana to show her both as a sensitive and sensible person. Though the family of Roxana was not a happy one, yet the presence of the baby Roxana brought untold joy in the lives of Jal and Coomy. Mistry presents her as a baby who

* Associate Prof. Dept. of Eng. Dronacharya Govt. College, Gurgaon

could not draw the dividing line between emotions and rationality. She is shown in a cheerful disposition with Yezad and the children. When the occasion demands, she can be reproachful, if her remonstrance of Nariman is anything to go by. When Nariman demands new plates for his birthday and Coomy has to work overtime, Roxana showers all her invectives on him.

At one stage of the novel Nariman regrets his wrong decision of transferring *Chateau Felicity* in the names of his step-children, Jal and Coomy. He likens his impulsive act to that of King Lear who bartered away his kingdom to his daughters, Goneril and Regan. Just as the kind, considerate and lovable Cordelia became the staff of his old age, similarly, Roxana was always by the side of his ailing father. Looking after her father in a small apartment caused great emotional stress, but she was able to keep her cool. She emerged as a successful mother on account of the training she imparted to her children, Jehangir and Murad. They were capable of making the required adjustment so that they could exist peacefully under a common roof. They had inculcated the art of making sacrifices under one roof, their mother being the true model of sacrifice. In order to give a gift to his younger brother on Christmas Murad trudged to school on foot and avoided the use of the bus. Yezad who had been non-chalant towards Nariman became ashamed of his former conduct. He was carried away by the surge of emotions and offered to help Nariman in the absence of Roxana. The strength of determination, the firmness of will and stoic forces made Roxana stand erect even in her desperate predicament. Small wonder these qualities helped to hold the family together when it was about to crack and wilt under pressure.

The true feminist is he/she who applauds the goodness of women and presents women with their shortcomings. If Roxana is extolled for her virtues, Coomy is castigated for her limitations. She dominates Nariman and Jal and considers herself the strong woman of *Chateau Felicity*. But some of her decisions are based on her adamant attitude, hence they prove to be wrong. She cannot read into the need of the hour and decides to buy a commode for Nariman instead of a bedpan. With the cruel motive of sending Nariman to *Pleasant Villa*, she damages the ceiling of *Chateau Felicity*. She is hell-bent on creating such a situation for Nariman that he may not return for good. When Jal leaves for the Stock Exchange, she reprimands him for his not sympathizing with her lot. Little does she realize that without Jal's working in the Stock Exchange, the family cannot make both ends meet. Her resentment of Nariman, which is inherited from her

mother, makes her blind to reason and goodness in others. She is unable to appreciate or thank Nariman for all that he has done for Jal and her.

Coomy is jealous of Roxana's happiness, which she has earned by her good nature and sacrifice. Her adamancy and envy render her child-like and make her behave like an immature woman. This immaturity results in her incapability of empathizing with the life of others. Whereas Jal has the foresight to understand that Nariman's invalid presence will create many problems in Roxana's small flat and even impose strain on Roxana's shoe-string budget. Coomy is lacking in both foresight and farsight. She is not self-critical; hence her inability to read into her blunders which has made Nariman's life stressful. Mistry likens Coomy to a tyrannical and blustering headmistress who crafts strange rules to control the life of the patriarch. There is a note of amused contempt in Mistry's narration: She should have been a headmistress, enacting rules for hapless schoolgirls, making them miserable. Instead here she was, plaguing him with rules to govern every aspect of his shrunken life. Besides the prohibition against locked doors, he was required to announce his intention to use the WC.. (Family Matters 2)

Coomy is not an embodiment of limitations only. She emerges as a symbol of feminine sacrifice in maintaining the values of the family which she holds dear. She is not gregarious by nature. Whereas girls of her age-group enjoyed parties, attended religious functions, courted Parsi bachelors and pursued their academic careers, Coomy preferred to remain indoors. She is so concerned about her psychic mother that she reneges on her aspirations. It is the nursing for her ailing step-father that win kudos for her. After the death of her mother, she sustains her brother, Jal in as much as a mother sustains a child. Her accidental death caused by a falling steel girder is full of inconsolable sorrow. But even a cursory reader of the novel looks upon her death as a sort of sacrificial ritual. We must remember that at that time Coomy was engaged in doing something useful and good; helping the men in repairing the ceiling. Her death does not invoke any feeling of tragic waste; the house which is repaired points at the unification of the members of the family which is likely to take place at least in the not too distant future, if not in the near future.

Yasmin is a typical case for study in feminism and the feminist theory of Germaine Greer in *The Female Eunuch* is highly apt in her case. Greer's work portrays marriage as a legalized form of slavery for women, and attacks the systematic denial and misrepresentation of female sexuality by male-dominated society. By entering into a contract of marriage with

Nariman, Yasmin has condescended to a legalized form of slavery; small wonder, Nariman denies her love and maintains an adulterous relationship with Lucy. (*The Female Eunuch*)

The most balanced personality of all the important female characters is that of Roxana. Yezad, her husband had animosity towards Nariman which he declared loudly and boldly, but Roxana took care of her father ungrudgingly. When Roxana was absent, Yezad held the bedpan for Nariman with the help of his sons and he was at his wits' end to understand the magnitude of the sacrifices of Roxana. In the eyes of Rangarajan, the plasterer, Roxana was not merely a housewife but an ideal example of womanhood. Though many Western feminists like Betty Friedan could find fault with a woman like Roxana, yet she fitted admirably in the Indian concept of womanhood. In *The Feminine Mystique* Friedan argues that women have been encouraged to confine themselves to the narrow roles of housewife and mother, forsaking education and career aspirations in the process. (*The Feminist Mystique* 10). But the role of Roxana in an Indian home is good enough to silence such Western feminists. Rangarajan's words serve as an eye opener: What are you saying, dear lady? Housewifery is the most important calling, requiring umpteen talents. Without housewife there is no home; without home, no family. And without family, nothing else matters, everything from top to bottom falls apart or descends into chaos. Which is basically the malady of the West. (Family Matters 175)

Daisy Aunty is presented as a foil to Coomy and Roxana. Whereas domestic drudgery has left its indelible marks greatly on Coomy and to a lesser extent on Roxana, Daisy Aunty has managed to steer clear of it by her passion for music, mainly the violin. Even such a sane woman is not left free from the rumor-mongering of ladies. The ladies of the housing complex do throw barbs occasionally at her non-chalant attitude to life and her quirkiness of temper. Perhaps to squash such rumours, Mistry has painted the humane side of her nature. Roxana recalls her with thankfulness when she rendered help to her with the pressure cooker and played the violin to soothe the ruffled nerves of the ailing Nariman. Even though Jal did not favour her decision to play the violin, she honoured her promise to the old man who was battling for his life.

In Daisy Aunty we have a wonderful picture of the independent woman who is neither a domestic drudge nor a victim of patriarchal mores. Her character is such that even the theories of the Western feminists, Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* and Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* do not apply to her. In brief, the three ladies of the Vakeel household

constitute the real feminine power that hold fragmented families together. Though Rohinton Mistry had painted stereotyped women in his early fiction, yet he showed remarkable development in depicting complex characters in his later fictions, Dina Dalal (*A Fine Balance*) and Roxana (*Family Matters*) being the most memorable of them all.

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24

Shashi Deshpande's 'Stone Women'- A Feministic Shift

Lovleen Bains*

There is no denying the fact that Shashi Deshpande is a writer par excellence. Her writings are not a mere document to be read and appreciated rather each word and each story she writes, carries an independent history which when correlated with the present, seems less in continuation but more in genesis of still another story, definitely with a newer focus and improved vision. Deshpande is fully aware of the fact that the reforming of male psyche may yet be a distant dream but she can at least move out on her own, shedding every past thought, action and relation that had kept her bound to the crude patriarchal roots, ever since. Her 'reconstructive' approach in 'deconstructing' the 'formed' images of the female goddesses, brings out an entirely unique aspect of her writings, as a votary of female choices and voices.

In Deshpande's onward march from femininity to feminism, she approximates the mythical women to the contemporary ones and tries to negotiate a deserving place for them. Deshpande is in no way oblivious of the integral part these myths have played in the integration of the cultural and moral fabric of Indian life. She says- : "Myths are still important to us. We do not want to demolish them, we need to live by; they have shaped our ideas for a great many years, they embody our dreams.What women writers are doing today is not the rejection of the myths, but a meaningful and creative reinterpretation of them. We are looking for a fresh knowledge of ourselves in them, trying to discover what is relevant to our lives today" (Deshpande, 94)

The women protagonists of Deshpande have been relatively proportionate to all times, ages and milieus. As daughters, wives, mothers, mistresses and even as deities and goddesses, the traumatic outpourings have failed to revert. 'Her-story' had to be submerged into "his-story", even if she had to recreate an entirely new one.

The modern Indian women, as portrayed in Shashi Deshpande's novels, are definitely working towards the goal of emancipation. The conflicting traditional and modern tendencies have been subtly brought out in Shashi Deshpande's short stories. The spirit of post modern Indian English literature, of bringing about a gradual assured change, has been aptly worked out in the works of Shashi Deshpande. The excavation of

* Assistant Professor, Department of English, Guru Nanak National College Doraha, Ludhiana.

myths and mythical women characters especially, as Deshpande feels, has made it possible for us to ask a great many questions, questions which had never been asked before. The growing strength of feminist thinking has enabled the women writers all over India and in all languages to explore the myths and stereotypes. In an effort to retell the tale, Deshpande's women writers are trying to create a space for them- a space long deprived and wrongly abandoned.

'The Day of the Golden Deer', an important story from the anthology 'Stone Women' represents the male voice to be the ultimate one while that of the female to be weakened to the extent of oblivion. But at the same time it witnesses the *sati savitri Sita's* social and psychological emergence in a way that Lord Rama stands exposed. She questions the prudence and wisdom of the so-called God of Gods, Lord Rama and in turn renounces him from her side- "It is time for me to do so, to give up the idea of perfection in any man, in any human." (73) Sita feels doubly exiled when she hears her husband, the Lord God of the universe, doubting her like ordinary humans and expecting her to pass one test of purity after another. She recalls the fateful day of the abduction when she felt the villain Ravana clutch her tightly in his embrace. But that day and this day of her renunciation, she says, are no different as she says- "Yes, I have, on that day, the day of the golden deer, when I had felt the iron hands of the seemingly gentle hermit grip me. Now I feel them again, alien hands on me, cruel, hard and hurting. With an effort greater than I have ever made in my life, I take hold of myself". (62)

She no more wishes to be a queen, especially the queen of that king who though may be supreme in the eyes of his people but is fickle in his mind, weak in spirit and non-resolute in commitments. She wishes to go back to being what she was. 'The daughter of king Janka. No, not even that. I am just Sita.' (65) as she shuns the very idea of associations especially with those who are male in nature.

The so-called gods may hide much in the words as 'Duty' and 'Fate'. If it was for 'duty' Rama had to revert and if it was 'fate' that separated them from each other, the ordinary mortals, who uphold them as ideals, shall be the first ones to imitate and keep duty and hold fate responsible for usurping the rights of women and considering them a foot mat. Sita is very well aware that it has been duty that had been her rival ever since. It is under this word that innumerable *Sitas* have been crushed, stifled and sacrificed till this time. Sita is very well aware that Lakshmana would finally resort to this weapon of duty and remind her so but she is prepared to

survive every attack on her newly founded weapon of words, that hitherto eluded her: "Duty-yes I knew the word would come. Yes, he is dutiful, I know that Lakshmana, and righteousness too. I never doubt that. But tell me Lakshmana, what happens to those who are crushed under the chariot of his righteousness? (68) Sita, at this juncture resembles Kshama of Deshpande's novel 'Come up and Be Dead', who was in full acquired full command of the existing situation and was better positioned now, than had been ever before. About Kshama, Deshpande asserts proudly as she presents her in the following words - "There was no doubt at all that the woman who stood on the dias was fully in command both of the situation and herself. Small made and dumpy though she was, there was an unmistakable air of authority about her." (Come and be Dead, 5) Similarly, no soft words can now soften Sita's stand and deter her from speaking in the most pronounced manner, as if realizing for the first time, ever since her birth, that she possesses the power of speech.

She feels sorry not for him but for herself as it is the result of her own doings, of her concern and devotion that has now made her suffer. She is very well aware that it was not fate that left her unprotected on the day of the golden deer. It was her own fault and the result of her own weakness as she confesses- "the weakness of my great, yes, too great a love for my husband. It was this that made me a coward of me, making me afraid that he had been hurt" (70-71)

Deshpande makes her Sita so determined in her own self that she finally forgives her husband. But her Sita, however, clarifies at the same time the nature of forgiveness accorded by her to her husband in the following words- "I will forgive him, after all, not because I am a virtuous and devoted wife, not because I am good and merciful. Not even for the sake of our shared life, our memories, tears and laughter, but because I pity him". The traditional woman is apparently witnessed to be breaking the cocoon of protection, in which she had been pitted both by society and her own self and in turn pitting those who have been the framers and moulders of her destiny ever since.

With clearer perspectives and awakened posture, she generates a mature outlook towards her role and position in the socialized set up. As per her newly developed understanding of male psychology, she utters: "For what is he but a victim of his own idea of himself? He is still chasing it. The golden deer of perfection, while I... Not, for me, the day of the golden deer is over, I know it is nothing but a mirage, a delusion." (72). The truth dawns upon her finally as she is now aware that she has to leave behind

the demons of fear, hate, self-pity and bitterness to emerge out of the forest of exile once more. Lakhamana, who is the representative of the male psyche throughout the story, looks at the changed Sita, who can now read out in his eyes that 'he has realized it too' (72). It is the new women, appearing in the guise of Deshpande's Sita, who after shunning enforced confinement and subordination to either the commonly placed word 'duty' or frequently quoted word 'fate,' is all set to redefine her role by declaring once and for all that 'It is finally over' (73). Thus, Indu-like as in Deshpande's bigger narrative *Roots and Shadows*, Sita arrives at a rationale towards the end and seem to echo former's words thus—"Love, that's a word I don't really understand. It seems to me an overworked word...the sexual instinct...that is true. The material instinct...that's true too. Self interest, self-love...they are basic truth." (Roots and Shadows, 97)

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Style and Narrative Technique in Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

Dr. Surekha Ahlawat*

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner is a ballad in seven parts which tells the story of a disastrous voyage. The poem opens abruptly with the description of an old mariner who stops one member of a marriage party with the magic of his appearance with his glittering eye: *He holds him with his glittering eye \The Wedding-Guest stood still, \And listens like a three years' child: \The Mariner hath his will (The Rime of the Ancient Mariner 257)* The poet creates the ambience necessary for his story which sets up in the reader, expectations as to the course of events. The mysterious and tense atmosphere of the poem is hinted by the action of the wedding guest.

26

Coleridge's suggestiveness was evident both in his ambivalent and ambiguous use of words. The words 'ancient mariner' suggested to the readers the old medieval age to which the mariner belonged. The poet produced an image of medieval days in the following lines in which the mariner loosened his grip on the hand of the wedding guest: *Hold off! Unhand me, grey – beard loon! \Eftsoon his hand dropt he. (The Rime of the Ancient Mariner 257)* The poet's use of the informal word 'loon' (a silly or a foolish person) is followed by the word 'Eftsoon' (soon after). In this way, Coleridge maintained stylistic continuity in the lines by his use of archaisms.

From a description of the voyage, the poet abruptly shifts his attention to the bride and the musical party that accompanies her. The poet does so, in order to keep the dramatic interest of his story alive: *The bride hath paced into the hall, \Red as Rose is she; \Nodding their heads before her goes \The merry minstrelsy.* The expression 'Red as Rose' is both a simile and an alliteration. The quatrain closes with the brilliant assonance, 'The merry minstrelsy'. The combination of simile, alliteration and assonance creates a melodic beauty that is unsurpassable.

The poet created a feeling of usufruct in the hearts of the mariners when they reflected on the activities of the albatross it's eating the food with them, it's sitting on the mast and even its perching on the cabin for the nine vespers. At that point in the story, the poet described the 'White Moon' as it was seen through the 'fog-smoke white'. We appreciated the poet's ability to combine monosyllabic words with disyllabic words, for

* Associate Professor, Department of English, MMH College, Ghaziabad

instance: *While all the night, through fog-smoke white \Glimmered the White Moon shine*. (*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* 259) Here the word *Glimmered*, a disyllabic word was grouped with a host of monosyllables. It was a quality conspicuous in the sonnets of Shakespeare, a poet whom Coleridge admired highly.

Apart from the alliterative effects of the line, the pictorial effects of the line deserve kudos. The swift movement of the ship in the calm sea is expressed through the poet's felicity of expression. The blowing of the breeze, the flowing of the foam, the following of the furrow, all created in our mind's eye, the image of the swift movement of the ship in the calm sea. The poet's skill in painting a standstill ship in a stationary ocean was remarkable. The reader was awe-struck by the transportive quality of the narrative verse. The image of a real ship was fused and coalesced with an image of a ship on canvas. The poet's ability to dislocate us from the natural world to the drawing room spoke volumes for the poet's style: *Day after day, day after day \We, struck nor breath nor motion \As idle as a painted ship \Upon a painted ocean.* (*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* 260)

The ballad style is reinforced by the repetition of the epithets, 'Day after day'. The polysyndeton (repetition of conjunctive connectives) shows the psychological crisis of the mariners clearly in the poet's epithets. '*We struck nor breath nor motion*'. The painted ship and the painted ocean are both suggestive of the ship on canvas. It is interesting to see the way Coleridge uses *Kinesthetic* image to create a repulsion in the heart of the mariners as they watch closely and thoroughly, the crawling of some slimy creatures in the turbid water. In a kinesthetic image, there is movement of the parts of the body of the reader by means of sensory organs in his muscles and joints: *The very deep did rot: O Christ! That ever this should be! \Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs \Upon the slimy sea.* (*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* 260)

The poet creates a psychedelic effect when the mariners watch the water resembling '*a witch's oils*'. The line has a magic of superstition written all over it. The polysyndeton '*Burnt green and blue and red*' not only intensifies the effect of colours on our senses but also deepens the horror on our minds. Some of the sailors had a dream that a furious spirit from the icy region of the southern pole was chasing their ship in order to punish them. The spirit had been following them all the way in nine fathom deep water. The diction of the poet was congruous with the magic of the superstitions and dreams that mingled into medieval life as a living force. He certainly recreated that verbal magic for us in his ballad so that we could remain

hypnotized by it. Any reader would remain awe - struck by the poet's particularization of numbers. But it is a ploy on the part of the poet to lend credence to his narrative: *Nine fathom deep he had followed us \From the land of mist and snow.* (*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* 261)

The poet spins a web of horror as he describes the skeleton ship approaching towards the ship of the mariners. But prior to that, he presented an awe-inspiring image of the sun which could be treated as a parallel to the Mariner's own psychological state. The movement of the ship is mentioned with crystalline simplicity and linked to gossamer. The sun's broad and burning face was peeping through its ribs as if it were a prisoner of the ship. Since the mind of the Ancient Mariner was crabbed and cabined, it could be treated as a pathetic fallacy. The ancient mariner's imprisoned and depressed mind was projected through the sun whose looks were equally depressing and alienated: *\Are those her sails that glance in the sun \Like restless gossamers? \Are those her ribs through which the Sun \Did peer, as through a gate?*

By showing the sun in a state of crisis and imparting a human quality to it, the poet personifies the sun. The supernatural incidents which follow in a quick succession send a chill down our spines. The mariner saw a figure of a woman on board the ship and thought that she was the only crew on the ship. Then he saw another figure, which he thought to be the death's mate. The meticulous description of the figure of the Death Mate made the whole scene blood-curdling— her red lips, her free looks, her golden yellow locks, and her skin as white as a patient of leprosy. Horror was created by the profound psychological insight of the poet. That is, instead of describing the poet described the effect of those horrible shapes on the characters of the poem. For instance, the Life-in-Death was as fiendish as a night-mare. *\The Night-mare LIFE-IN-DEATH was she, \Who thicks man's blood with cold.* (*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* 263)

The poet had portrayed the ghastly sights as they were seen through the eyes of the mariner. The Ancient Mariner saw two passengers on board the skeleton ship (Life-In-Death and Death) who were casting dice to decide something. The poet made the woman (Life-In-Death) declare that she had won the game. 'The game is done! I've won! I've won! By inserting that dialogue in his narration, the poet evinced signs of his dramatic skill. The Ancient Mariner shuddered to think about the fate of his companion. Fear was flowing in his body and it seemed as though it were draining away his life – blood in as much as a man sips drink from a cup. The truth of the emotions as they were depicted by the poet, brought the world of

the dead very close to the world of the living:\Fear at my heart, as at a cup\My life-blood seemed to sip! (The Rime of the Ancient Mariner 263)

Repetition is a common device in ballad poetry and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is no exception. Whole lines and stanzas are often repeated. The oft-quoted lines from the poem reads:\Water, water, every where \And all the boards did shrink\Water, water everywhere\Nor any drop to drink. (The Rime of the Ancient Mariner 260) Coleridge follows *incremental repetition* on his ballad. In this, he repeats a line or stanza, but makes an addition that advances the story. The fifth stanza and the tenth stanza of Part One are wonderful examples of *incremental repetition* and the addition of a line in the stanza ten gives a twist to the story. The stanza reads:\The Wedding – Guest sat on a stone:\He cannot choose but hear;\And thus spake on that Ancient man, The bright – eyed Mariner. (The Rime of the Ancient Mariner 258) \There is a slight variation in the tenth stanza:\The Wedding – Guest he beat his breast\Yet he cannot choose but hear;\And thus spake on that ancient man,\The bright – eyed Mariner. (The Rime of the Ancient Mariner 258)

Like the conventional writer of ballad poetry, Coleridge uses some stock-phrases and words. For instance we find ‘*The bright – eyed Mariner*’, ‘*The Storm-Blast came*’, ‘*And ice, mast-high*’, ‘*the star-dogged Moon*’ and the like. The poet made use of the ballad conventions, with great refinement and subtlety with a highly self-conscious art and stylized diction.

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Mikhail Bakhtin as a Theorist of the Novel with Special Reference to “From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse.”

*Babita**

Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin (1895-1975), generally known as Mikhail Bakhtin was a Russian theorist and essayist, born in South of Moscow and grown up in Vilnius, a Lithuanian town called “the Jerusalem of the North” because of its rich Jewish intellectual heritage. Bakhtin studied classics at St. Petersburg University. As a student and teacher in the 1920s, he began to define his linguistic and literary theories against the dominant school of Russian Formalism, offering his critique of formalism based on his assertion of the essentially social nature of language. This Russian thinker was ‘discovered’ by the West decades after his work in the 1940s. Bakhtin was the first thinker to provide a full critique of Russian Formalism in his book *The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship*.

In his early essay’s *Art and Answerability* and *Toward a Philosophy of the Act* written during 1919 and 1926 he shows his abiding interest in his theories of genre and the novel, particularly his concepts of “dialogic” or “dialogism,” “carnival,” “chronotope,” “polyphony,” and “heteroglossia”. Most of these concepts were drawn from his readings of Dostoevsky. Around 1929, he read Dostoevsky and began a new theory of criticism, polyphonic in nature, because he found in Dostoevsky the novel as parodying-travesty genre, going back to the classical and medieval culture, as for example, the satyr play. He derived his conception of the carnival itself from the popular culture in which even the devil was laughed at. He expounded these views in his seminal book *Problems in Dostoevsky’s Poetics* (1963) and in *Rabelais and His World* (1966). For not making art serve the state, the Russian rulers exiled him. However, he continued his work developing the dialogic nature of art, particularly that of the novel.

Together with Pavel Medvenov, and Valentin Voloshinov, Bakhtin’s ideas are recognized as the Bakhtin School separately from other formalists. They were not interested in abstract linguistics of the kind which later formed the basis of structuralism. They were concerned with language or discourse as a social phenomenon with ‘words’ as archive, dynamic social signs. Bakhtin was concerned with how human give form to their experiences. For Bakhtin, language is mutable, reversible, anti-hierarchical

* Assistant Professor, Department of English, Hindu College, Sonapat

and powerfully regenerative. In his analysis of Pushkin Onegin he shows how the author exploits different voice-zones which do not, merely represent social - voices but are associated with “various literary school and genres of the time.”

Bakhtin in the essay “From the Prehistory of Novelistic Discourse,” which probably written in 1940, discusses the origin and nature of the novel arguing that “mere literary styles” are not enough to analyze and define the novel, and instead we should focus on the relationship between the distinct elements that distinguish the novel from other genres. This essay is a plea for giving due recognition to the novel as an independent genre, as against its known-recognition in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Twentieth century with its backdrop of nineteenth century is predominantly age of the novel. Bakhtin found an upsurge in the writing of novels, but its theoretical part, however, remained to be explored, particularly the distinctive features of novelistic discourse, which he called stylistic *specificum*. He found five different stylistic approaches: one, author’s presentation; two, stylistic analysis; three, characteristic of novel’s individual style; four, novelist’s language; and five, the novel as a rhetorical device.

Put together all these types of stylistic analysis, he further found, were inadequate, in defining the *specificum* of the novel. The above five features were found general in nature, as for example, the author’s personality, the school to which he belongs and so on. Bakhtin sees in these traditional practices of criticism very weak focus on the novel, determined as it is by interest in either novelist’s personality or the particular age, or literary tendency which produced it. The linguistic elements are seen as products of forces outside language and not the condition in the novel. So the basic flaw in such critical treatment is that language and style of a novel is not seen as the language and style of a novel, but is interpreted in terms of historical-biographical and social conditions.

Now the question arises, what is the role of the author in this polyphonic Carnival? Bakhtin says that the author in the novel is left with almost no direct language of his own. He sees novel’s language as a system of languages which interanimate each other. These various systems (languages) are marked in the novel by quotations marks, intonational features, voices and various gaps. Yet that does not mean that author is no centre in it, rather the author is supposed to be at the centre where all levels criss-cross. Bakhtin wanted to isolate the novel and then point out its specific feature. His was a scientific method and its results were equally scientific. Bakhtin carefully analyzed the language of the novel, indeed “a

system of languages” that mutually and ideologically interanimates each other. It is thus, that a novel becomes a seat for carnival. Different linguistic and stylistic forms may be said to belong to different system of languages in the novel. In his opinion the various extra-novelistic aspects that are highlighted by critics such as author’s personality, particular tendencies, certain school’s style, poetic language as a phenomenon common to all – all these conceal novel as genre, with all its promises of generating a language that belongs to it alone and demands to be properly understood by examining the genre.

Mikhail Bakhtin draws a clear distinction between the specific novelistic discourse and the demands of poetic form. The earlier critics committed the fault of seeking to understand novel in the light of the rich analysis available in poetry. The reason could be that in fiction relatively little theoretical work was done, and so critics followed the poetic yardsticks. Taking the view from the other angle, he wishes to establish the novel has a life of its own, and can be understood only by principles and categories formulated out of the material offered by this genre.

A novel is a heterogeneous linguistic stylistic field, not a homogenous and a monotonous narrative. It has never been so in the classical forms of epic, for that matter tragedy, in which the same style exists in an elevated form. There is no room for the comic in it, although Homer himself wrote a comic epic, unfortunately lost in posterity. It was Fielding, who revived the novel in epical form, saying that it is a comic epic in prose. Interestingly, whole of the middle ages were rich in the comic and parody, for example, the parody sonnets with which Don Quixote begins. The sonnet genre has always been associated with the serious. But in Don Quixote, they appeared as part of a novel. In Don Quixote, we don’t have the classical hero, the knight-at-arms but a parody of him. The novel ridicules knighthood.

Bakhtin says that parody (laughter) is a means of ridiculing another’s language and another’s direct discourse. By using parody the writer shows another side of the work which remains concealed in the serious straight forward genre. It creates a new literary and linguistic consciousness.

The importance of parodic-travesty forms in world literature, according to Bakhtin, is enormous; several examples can be supplied. The essay authenticates with references to literature from the middle ages, most of which are unknown to the modern reader. That is what makes this essay esoteric. Nevertheless, the essay enriches our reading of the comic in literature where we don’t normally expect, as for example, the figure of ‘comic Odysseus,’ a parodic travesty of his high epic and the tragic image.

Not only in the Middle Ages but in the classical times the comic is not absent. We have the figure of 'the comic Hercules'. We cannot dismiss the comic views of Aristophanes, then of Plautus and Terrence.

That means comedy is more pervasive than tragedy. Bakhtin, as noted above makes reference to Homer's *Margites*, an epic about fools. In fact, the comic, "rips the word away from its object, disunifies the two, shows that a given straightforward generic word – epic or tragic – is one-sided, bounded, incapable of exhausting the object..." (Bakhtin 134).

It is a necessary part of the serious; a play so to say of what has become dead end of life. That is why perhaps in the most serious literature there is always an element of the comic. The ancient Romans called it 'Saturnalia.'

The novel of all genres is perhaps the most fun loving genre. It robs the spirit of seriousness and allows freedom possible, freedom for possessing the world. In the essay Bakhtin has touched upon only two factors that were at work in the prehistory of novelistic discourse:

There remains before us the very important task of studying speech genres – primarily the familiar strata of folk language that played such an enormous role in the formulation of novelistic discourse and that, in altered form, entered into the composition of the novel as a genre (153).

Separated by a space, the last paragraph concisely summed up Bakhtin's discourse on the prehistory of the novel, understanding the importance of the history of the formation of the novel, beyond the interests of "mere literary styles." Staying true to his form, Bakhtin's last words included a number of examples:

Here, at the conclusion, we wish only to emphasize that the novelistic word arose and developed not as the result of a narrowly literary struggle among tendencies, styles, abstract world views – but rather in a complex and centuries-long struggle of cultures and languages. It is connected with the major shifts and crises in the fates of various European languages, and of the speech life of peoples. The prehistory of the novelistic word is not to be contained within the narrow perimeters of a history confined to mere literary styles (153).

Finally, Bakhtin reiterates that the rise of novelistic discourse can be understood and correctly studied by viewing the basic of clash of cultures, that the languages represent, and not by studying the evolution of literary style as abstract structure as some scholars have tried to do. This essay reveals the fundamental ideas generated by the later formalism

30

of Russia that emphasized that a polyphonic interplay of various character's voices where no world-view is given superiority over others.

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Reworking *Mahabharata* in Comic Mode: A Critical Study of Selected Titles from *Amar Chitra Katha*

Tulika Kakkar*

There has always been a strong link between tradition and culture in India. In other words, culture in India has to withstand the test of time. Culture in India is the articulation of everyday life material practices. Indian culture subsumes in itself various contradictory and mutually inclusive constituents. The genre of comics can be best framed in the tradition of cultural studies. The study of graphic arts have aptly demonstrated how posters, calendar art, comic books, video cassettes, audio recordings, televised serials and films have been instrumental in transporting messages to larger audience and across greater distances.

The proposed research paper examines how the cultural imaginary in the context of India is represented, disseminated and consumed through the modes of visual/graphic/prose narratives in the comic book series *Amar Chitra Katha*. The mixing-up of two mediums (verbalised and visual) opens up another dimension of narrativity which is different from the primary narratives of epics like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* by recreating the story as visual representation in context of contemporary India. *Amar Chitra Katha* (commonly referred as *ACK*) started its career in 1967, when different fractions of religion and nationalism dominated the post-independent India. *Amar Chitra Katha* is a series of comic books, which retells and reconstructs classical, traditional folk tales, religious stories, biographies and moments in history and for the most part these can be gleaned from different cultural, religious and historical perspectives. Marketed to parents as educational tools, the audience of the series is primarily children of the middle class in India and the diaspora. *Amar Chitra Katha* which translates as "Immortal Illustrated Story" was begun by Anant Pai, who is still the editor of the series. *Amar Chitra Katha* has been published in more than two hundred volumes of thirty-two colour illustrated pages. Anant Pai has written, edited and supervised the production of each issue.

The *Mahabharata* is considered as "itihās" or history. The sage Vyasa, to whom the definitive or classical version of *Mahabharata* is ascribed, begins after the great snake sacrifice of King Janamejaya, great-grandson of Arjun. At the conclusion of the snake sacrifice the sage Vyasa narrates the history of the Pandavas and Kauravas at the behest of

Janamejaya. The perennial appeal of the *Mahabharata* consists, mainly in the fact that although it is an epic of the exploits of heroes, it also reveals a very human story. The human beings who pass through its pages display frailty as well as greatness. Even lord Krishna, who is believed to be one of the incarnations of Vishnu himself behaves as a human being. The human dimensions of the mythical characters informs the retelling of the great epic *Mahabharata*. Born to King Drupada of Panchala kingdom in an intense spiritual sacrifice to seek revenge on Dronnacharya, Draupadi arose from the sacrificial platform immediately after the birth of her brother Dhrishtadymana who too had emerged from the same fire. From the very beginning *ACK*, describes her as "dark and beautiful, [who] will bring about the destruction of the Kauravas (*ACK, Draupadi, 2*)". Draupadi beyond doubt has been depicted as extraordinarily beautiful who is blessed with a fine frame and divine beauty. Vyasa categorically stated that the creator had so fashioned her that her loveliness surpassed that of all women (reminiscent of Valmiki about Ahalaya) and enchanted everyone. At the time of her birth the divine premonitions said in an incorporeal voice that "this dark-complexioned girl will be the first of all women, and she will be the curse of the destruction of many Kshatriyas. . . Birth which is conventionally a symbol of prosperity and happiness spelled doom for the line of Kauravas with the birth of Draupadi. Her birth symbolized prosperity for Panchala Kingdom and utter destruction for the Kauravas. Draupadi's depiction in the text and epic is marked by the presence of opposite and reactionary forces trying to balance out each other. Her birth brought prosperity to the kingdom of Panchala but soothsayers prophesied death and destruction for the Kaurava clan.

Draupadi's action produces dialogic tension and propels her to move through various zones in the text. At every moment there is a "double voice" to her narrative. She emerges as a complex character who is simultaneously a mythical, social and political figure. As a character, her traits are not fixed, but they keep changing according to the context, both within the story and outside the story. Although it sounds logical that Draupadi married the one with whom she was secretly in love and disapproved the candidacy of Karna as that of a suitor belonging to a low caste. *ACK* approaches this episode in subtle terms and the violence of emotions is underplayed. Karna who wanted to prove his mettle in the swamyamvara replied "You should not have humiliated me so, Draupadi" (*ACK, Draupadi, 7*) would never forget this insult and would settle the scores for this insult in the game of rigged dice.

* Research Scholar, Department of English & Cultural Studies, Panjab University, Chandigarh

In the game of rigged dice after losing his kingdom and wealth, Duryodhana tempted Yudhisthira to stake Draupadi and by staking her in one last game he might as well win all he has lost. Yet, the stars favored Duryodhana once again and Yudhisthira lost his all claims of kingship and his rights as a husband to Draupadi. With triumphant cries soaring from Kauravas section, Duryodhana intoxicated with pride ordered: Let her sweep the chambers, force her thereof, and let the unfortunate stay where our serving women are” (125 Kisari Mohan Ganguli). Many historians and critics have tragically presented the brutality unleashed on the day Draupadi was dragged forcefully by Dushasana into the assembly hall by her hair, yet as a character Draupadi still defies being put into the victim zone. Undoubtedly ACK presents Draupadi as one ‘having five husbands yet a lone fighter’. Her hair which for the moment has accentuated her subject-position of a victim further becomes instrumental in her fight against her tormentors. Her refusal to tie or knot them till she had her revenge on Duryodhana and Dushasana proves hair to be a field of signification. Alf Hiltebeitel and Barbara D. Millers have noted that hair by itself is not a “natural symbol” but a zone of semiotic meanings. Hair as a product of our biological inheritance cannot be ignored as it goes on to articulate plethora of meanings in different cultures. By overcoming self-pity and degeneration of woman, Draupadi justifies not only her rage but also dominated the patriarchal narrative by the “liberation discourse”, which was so far unheard of in case of women.

The Kings, sages and reformers of ACK have been usually endowed with the task of setting the fundamental order when the balance is challenged or threatened. They have often been depicted as gurus or revered personalities who have emerged out of their recluse and entered the world of politics. However, this assumption gets understated in the depiction of Bhishma who is a character who lived most part of his life in active political service and in the end followed ‘dharma’ to its last legs. ACK refrains from passing a worldview about him as it is difficult to judge a person who sacrificed so much in his life and yet in the end suffered on a bed of arrows. His sacrifices certainly managed to create a huge problem of succession. His vow of celibacy turned out to be a curse on the Bharata dynasty that led eventually to a horrendous war of succession. Is ACK then deviating from the grand narratives by suggesting to its readers that selflessness too can have its limitations? Bhishma sacrificed his own happiness for the father’s sake. He remained a celibate throughout his life and refused the kingship of Hastinapur, and administered the realm disinterestedly for two generations. On the contrary if he had refrained

from taking the ‘terrible oath’, (hence the name given Bhishma Pitamah) he might have continued the royal line of Bharatas, lived a peaceful, domestic, *grihastha* life of the second stage, and spared the mass destruction. Bhishma’s story sets the thinking process of what it means to act selflessly, without vanity.

Critics and Historians have tried to assess the suffering of Bhishma from various perspectives. *Mahabharata* is essentially of the view that *dharma* belongs to the realm of action and man has no choice but to act, a maxim that is the core of *Bhagvad Gita*. The arena of *dharma* is vast and there is element of choice within action or *dharma* which further resonates the meaningfulness of the question ‘what should I do?’ But to make a choice in action is a very different matter. When Bhishma forcefully carried off daughters of King of Kashi—Amba, Ambika and Ambalika to marry them off to Vichitravirya he acted without much thought and hence paved the way for his own downfall and ultimate death in the form of ‘Shikhandi’. ACK reckons the rage and humiliation of Amba as she blames Bhishma for her unjustified misery —“Bheeshma is the cause of all my suffering. I will destroy him” (ACK, *Bheeshma*)

ACK does glorify the character of Bhishma but not at the cost of failing to outline his flaws. Undoubtedly in his pursuance of duty Bhishma becomes over-indulgent. The episode detailing the character of Amba is central in understanding the suffering of Bhishma. Actions have reverberations and consequences not all of which can be understood or predicted. His undoing proved to be the result of his actions committed in haste and without much thought although he would remain the most self-sacrificing character in the epic.

Karna is the most exciting figure in the epic, and his tragic struggle over his identity makes us think beyond questions of status to our common notions of inequality, caste, fidelity, and even generosity. Human beings tend to view each other in accordance with their place in the world. Some societies are more hierarchical than others, and it is difficult to escape one’s origins. The *Mahabharata* is set in such a social order which leads Karna to be slighted constantly and the epithet *Sutaputra*, ‘charioteer’s son’, haunts him all his life. We are hence reminded how difficult it is to escape one’s origin in pre-modern societies.

As a character Karna will be forever known for his valor and his charitable nature, but more importantly, for his loyalty bordering on devotion to his friend Duryodhana, who accords him royal status by coronation as the king of Anga. Although righteous at heart, as a show of royalty to his

friend, Karna participates in Duryodhana nefarious activities, thus adding layers of contradiction to his character. His life provides the occasion to debate the illegitimacy of birth, the stigma of bastardization and the emotional pain of abandonment, in addition to the social inequalities of caste and creed. These are not necessarily misreadings of the characters, but one must recognize that the range of interpretation of Karna's character is much narrower than Draupadi. Karna's follies and his association with evil is overlooked and a casual connection between his misdeeds and his final fate is not made, whereas Draupadi's woes are seen as a result of her impetuous laughter and uncontrolled anger. Together, their character provides ample opportunities for readers to develop their narrative on the politics of caste and gender and blend contemporary concerns with the ancient past.

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The People and the State in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*

Gurpreet Kour*

Written around 1599-1600, *Julius Caesar* is a tragedy by William Shakespeare which can be read as a political play with the political theme of the conflict between two ideologies – dictatorship and republicanism. The play deals with a significant part of the historical past of classical Rome and is based on the historical events surrounding the conspiracy against the ancient Roman leader Julius Caesar and the civil war that followed his death. Shakespeare portrays Caesar's assassination on the Ides of March (March 15) by a group of conspirators who feared the ambitious leader would turn the Roman Republic into a tyrannical monarchy. Marchette Chute writes in *Stories from Shakespeare* that "Julius Caesar is a story of politics. It tells of treachery and good intentions, and it rises to the final tragedy of civil war" (124).

The play is concerned with the problem of an appropriate form of government for a country, rebellion against dictatorship and the failure of such a rebellion. Shakespeare conveys the idea in his play that a successful form of government does not depend upon abstract notions or high idealism; it rather depends upon the proper functioning of those ideas and the practical implication of the notions concerning the welfare of the state. The play *Julius Caesar* proposes the right of rebellion against the established form of government by its people if it fails to live up to their expectations. The play also proves that the individual motives and personal interests serve no good to the state but only distort the unity and integrity of its people which ultimately leads to chaos and confusion among its inhabitants.

Shakespeare projects Brutus, the leader of the conspirators as a great and noble character. He points to the character of Brutus as the exemplar of republican virtue. He is shown as an anti-thesis to Caesar who is not presented as a very admirable character. The sincerity of Brutus has been emphasized upon throughout the play while the planning as well as the execution of the final deed i.e. the assassination of Caesar. He struggles throughout the play to live by his idealism for a perfect Roman Republic. His decisions are based purely on his ideas of what is best for his nation. It has not been an easy task for the other conspirators to lure Brutus as it is only after Cassius convinces him that Caesar is a great threat to their traditional republic and must be killed, that he joins hands with them believing it to be a preemptive strike against the dangers of a single authoritarian.

* Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of English, University of Jammu, Jammu

But here laid their greatest fault which even Brutus failed to realize that their only motive and intention from the very beginning has not been just to kill Caesar but they were all standing united for the spirit of republicanism. They believed that only with an absolute end of Caesar's life could they prevent the ambition from any possibility of growing into tyranny and thereby destroy the Republic of Rome. But they got too focused in their task and put all their nerves together to put an end to Caesar's life which they considered to be the end of the spirit of dictatorship that they forgot to keep the spirit of republicanism alive in the hearts of their own people and the state. People had lost all their interests and faith in the idea of republic and those supporting it failed to influence or inspire people in that direction as they had become quite used to the authoritative rulers and their dictatorship.

Brutus finds it the worst disgrace to be a slave and rejects to submit to tyranny and expects all to be against the suppression of their rights. He asks people "Had you rather Caesar were living, and die all slaves, than that Caesar were dead, to live all free men?" (III.ii.25). He expects everyone to love freedom, independence and self-respect but he fails to see that people were already accustomed to subservience and that is why instead of rejoicing at the end of tyrannical Caesar they offer to make Brutus, the next Caesar. Brutus once again behaves irrationally as he sees no offence in Antony's addressing the mob. Whereas Cassius is a much experienced politician as compared to Brutus who knows how the mob can be swayed by skillful oratory and therefore is against the idea of letting Antony speak. But Brutus feels so sure of his own words and the intelligent appreciation he gave that he underestimates any possibility of Antony's influencing people and turning them against him.

Antony, on the other hand, understands the psychology of the mob. He challenges and questions Brutus's only charge against Caesar, that of ambition, being sufficient for their not mourning over the death of Caesar. He falsifies that charge by reminding people how;

When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept:
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff...
A kingly crown which he did thrice refuse,
Was this ambition? (III.ii.92-98)

Antony's words produce the desired effect and the mob no longer believes that Caesar was at all ambitious. He even arouses the curiosity of people by producing Caesar's will and pretending not to read it for fear of consequences. He stimulates the passions of the audience by showing them

the numerous wounds inflicted on Caesar's body by the conspirators. He convinces the mob that Caesar's death was due to personal enmity and not due to any public wrongs done by him. At last, he discloses the provisions of the will containing a recommendation of seventy-five drachmas to each Roman citizen while all Caesar's walks, private gardens and orchards left to their free use. This excites the irrational and impulsive mob to such a level that it rushes off to burn the traitor's homes and even to kill all of them.

Thus, Antony gains success in his sole aim to stir the mob against the conspirators by playing upon the basest feelings of the audience when he reads Caesar's will. He takes into consideration the self-interests of the people which enables him to succeed in his desire to crush the conspirators and that is how, the conspiracy ends in disaster.

Shakespeare also offers a very interesting perspective to the study of *Julius Caesar* in terms of politics which is the contrast between practical and the idealist principles. The play clearly reveals that it is very important for one to be a practical man of affairs if he has to succeed especially in case of political issues because in politics, abstract ideas hardly work. Sound political theories, earnest concerns for the state are sure to fail if they are not made practically possible and fit to be implemented. This contrast between practicality and idealism is served through the characters of Brutus and Antony. Brutus being too idealistic and Antony on the other side, a practical man and the one who is practical enough emerges successful.

Brutus was a genuine republican having sincere feelings for freedom and liberty of the people. It was his ardent republicanism that makes him arrive at a tragic decision regarding Caesar and it even shocked Caesar to find Brutus among his murderers and he utters "Et tu, Brute?" (III.i.77). Thus, Brutus commits this blunder of murdering Caesar depending upon a false logic. He is opposed to a system – the imperialist system. He wants to put an end to a form of government which he believes to be vicious and harmful, the dictatorial rule of one man and thus he takes up arms against it. He believes in a system of government which makes men free and he opposes the type of government that Caesar might set up which he believed would make slaves of Romans. But to his great wonder he discovers that the nobility of his motives does not bring freedom but civil strife and sordid struggle for power.

In this way, Brutus is also quite opposed to Cassius who does not hate tyranny or who is up against a system of government, a principle or a doctrine: he is rather up against a man whom he happens to dislike

thoroughly. Cassius is not guided by his public principles like Brutus but by his own personal issues. Brutus lives his entire life on absolute virtue despising materialism and always referring to the abstract values of republicanism. Being an idealist, he lacks practical, worldly wisdom that leads him to many faults in him.

Antony, on the other side, is a very practical man who does not lack anywhere in clever planning, manipulation of men and possessed immense potential for statesmanship. Cassius also calls him a "shrewd contriver" (II.i.158). His funeral speech reveals him as a master of oratory. He is a cold, calculative and even a ruthless politician. During the war with the conspirators, he shows his great skill and understanding as a general and military strategist. He is unlike Brutus since he is not a political idealist but a shrewd, practical politician.

All the conspirators however were against the very spirit of Caesar which they believed to be the spirit of arrogance and autocracy. But they could never put an end to that spirit even after killing Caesar. That very spirit lived on among Caesar's own followers, Antony and Octavius who assume the power and play the role of autocrat rulers after Caesar's death. They change the will of Caesar and deprive common people of the legacies left for them by Caesar himself. They take charge of everything and pass on judgments on lives of others suiting their own self interests. Since one ruler is murdered, the other takes his place and dominates the scene. But the need of the hour was not to change the ruler but to change the character of those who were ruled and those who had become quite monarchical in their very instincts. The spirit of the republic had long been dead and everything done in its name failed to revive its very essence and what prevailed ever afterwards was dictatorship, autocracy and autonomy.

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A Stylistic Approach to Henry Miller's *Black Spring*

Anju*

Henry Miller's novel, *Black Spring* was published in 1936, two years after he published the *Tropic of Cancer*. Many of the themes in both the novels are similar but the mood of the novelist in both of them is different. Explaining the connection between *Black Spring* and *Tropic of Cancer* Miller does not mince matters: "I am Chancre, the crab which moves sideways and backwards and forwards at will. I move in strange tropics". (*Black Spring* 41) Miller uses the *Black Spring* of the title as a metaphor for the blight of the world. Miller makes the narrative move in time and place, from Paris to memories of Brooklyn and New York and also to other planes to reverie and fantasia. He is less fierce now than what he was while writing *Tropic of Cancer*. Miller explores different modes and levels of perceptions. He presents a series of monologues, meditations, reminiscences, dreams and visions. The theme of the book is universal death and dark regeneration. Though Miller regards the whole world as diseased, yet he envisions a brand new world coming out of the egg "and no matter how fast I write the old world doesn't die fast enough. I hear the new machine guns and the millions of homes splinter at once; I see dogs running mad and pigeons dropping with letters tied to their ankles". (*Black Spring* 189)

Black Spring is a dazzling novel of Henry Miller from the stylistic standpoint. It would not be wrong to state that it is the work of a writer with a rampant imagination who is intoxicated with words. Though he is an autobiographical novelist, yet he can be regarded as a poet of reckless abandon. His language, at once exuberant and prodigal, is remembered mainly for its sound than for its meaning. His excessive fondness for jargon and parody makes him spin off into nonsense. 'Jabberwhorl cronstadt' is a verbal caricature of a friend. He often parodies the multisyllabic pontification of his friend; small wonder, he turns it into nonsense. In many of his conversations Jabberwhorl grows progressively drunk and we see his language reeling. Miller makes his catalogue of strange names and amazing tidbits of information. We watch his joking delight in scientific jargons: "... the great vertiginous vertebration ... the zoospores and the leucocytes wamroths and hollenlindens ... everyone's poem, the jellyfish is a poem too the finest kind of poem. You poke him here, you poke him there, he slithers and slathers, he's dithy and claborous, he has a colon and intestines, he's vermiform and ubisquishous (Henry Miller 132)

* (M.Phil,NET-JRF), Research Scholar, CCS University, Meerut

When we look at the final pun, we become doubly sure that Jabberwhorl jellyfish has been culled out not only from James Joyce but also from Lewis Carroll. To look for Joycean passages in the section entitled "Jabberwhorl cronstadt" would not be proper on the part of the reader because the whole of *Black Spring* is replete with Joycean passages. Just as Joyce, a master of parody employed a variety of styles, similarly Miller does not write in one style but in umpteen styles. Each section of *Black Spring* is written in a different style but it is quite amusing that the individual sections are written in chameleon style. Like the chameleon the style constantly changes its colours despite its dependence on more than a dozen sources. Though the major influence on Miller's style is that of James Joyce yet we cannot deny the resemblance of his style to those of Proust and Whitman. Just as Miller's other two works the *Tropic of Cancer* and the *Tropic of Capricorn* is Proustian similarly, The *Black Spring* is Proustian in its view of coexistent time and place, both of which are stimulated by memory and the senses. Even a causal reader of the novel can infer that Miller's writing is both evocative and nostalgic. His affinity to Whitman is perceptively clear. The style of Whitman has not only corrected his stance but also his style. Miller once declared, "for me the book is a man and my book is a man I am, the confused man, the negligent man, the reckless man, the lusty, obscene boisterous, thoughtful, scrupulous, lying a diabolically truthful man that I am" (*The Books in My Life* 35) Miller's rhetoric has much in common with that of Whitman. As one reads Miller's novel *Black Spring* one comes across long rhythmic lines pushing along through present participles all redolent of Whitman's verse.

Black Spring was presumably written before and after the publication of *Tropic of Cancer*. Small wonder, we do not find new techniques in *Black Spring*. Miller's attitude towards time is even more unresolved than his *Tropic of Cancer*. The aroma of vindictiveness and nostalgia which was absent in the *Tropic of Cancer*, certainly made its presence felt in *Black Spring*. One of the motifs is that man must act as if the past were dead and the future unrealizable. Nevertheless, the pervading sense of *Black Spring* is one of loss. Miller writes, "Whenever I have made my bed I have thought like a maniac to drive out the past. But at the last moment it is the past which rises up triumphantly, the past in which one drowns. With the last gasp one realizes that the future is a sham" (*Black Spring* 194) In *Black Spring* Miller seems to mouth both imprecations and prophecies at the one and the same time. We must do well to remember that Miller's vision in *Tropic of Cancer* is less turbulent than that in *Black Spring* but his style is decidedly bolder in *Black Spring*.

Kenneth Rexroth says: "what will preserve Miller and make him a minor classic is his style... He has been compared to the French 18th century naïve writer Bestif de la Bretonne and the resemblances are marked. He is almost as garrulous, almost as sex-obsessed, Miller is unassignable and his style is a careful cultivation of all these elements of communication the speech of interpersonal relations which violates the mechanisms of the dominant society. It is not just that the sexual capers of his characters expose the social lie. His prose disrupts acceptable speech. It does this so easily by simply being the common talk of his declassed caste. The lumpen intelligentsia talked this way in the days of Villon. His writing is spontaneous and uncontrolled on principle, but the control is in principle, in the intention. If Miller just tells you the time of day he could never be mistaken for Edith Wharton. *The Tropics* established a method of which would become dominant in the fiction of the latter half of the century – the roman fleuve in a different sense – the pages go by like a river in flood. The overwhelming flow of Proust of Joyce or Gertrude stein is highly contrived and recognizably so. In Miller and his descendants, the author begins by overwhelming himself. This is a method where nothing succeeds but success. Miller can sweep you away... Miller can be hilariously funny, but his humor is the humor of old time burlesque" (*Contemporary Novelists* 86)

36

Miller takes recourse to the surrealist style. M.H. Abrams in his book *A Glossary of Literary Terms* defines surrealism and explains its principles thus: "Surrealism" was launched as a concrete movement in France but Andre Breton's *Manifesto on Surrealism*, 1924. The expressed aim was a rebellion against all restraints on the free functioning of the human mind. These restraints included the logical reason, standard morality, social and artistic conventions and the control of artistic creation by forethought and intention. To ensure the unhampered operation of the deep mind, which they regarded as the only source of valid knowledge and art, surrealist turned to "automatic writing". The influence direct or indirect of surrealist innovations can be found in many modern writers in prose and verse who have broken with conventional modes of artistic organization to experiment with free associations, violated syntax, nonlogical and non chronological order, dream light and nightmarish sequences, and the juxtaposition of bizarre shocking or seemingly unrelated images. (*A Glossary of Literary Terms* 174)

In the section entitled "Into the Night life we have before us the scenario of a realist nightmare or rather, a dozen nightmares lumped together. It is like a surrealist film. It is replete with irrational sequences,

screaming terrors, Freudian guilt and logic. Just as a person tries to move out of a nightmare similarly the principle character frantically tries to find a way out. Miller has written a good deal about the creative process in different novels but in *Black Spring* he shows a creative imagination working on all levels.

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An Untitled Story

*Dr. N D Dani**

Rohit was an ambitious boy. Son of a medical doctor with an MD in paediatrics and a successful practice, Rohit wanted to follow in the footsteps of his illustrious father. He took advantage of the facility offered by the CBSE board to have both biology and Maths in Intermediate and passed out of the MS Roongta School with a ninety per cent overall percentage. When he could not get admission into a govt medical college – private medical colleges were no good - after clearing the combined pre-medical test, he decided to change track. He took admission in Teerthankar College for a BSc degree. His combination consisted of Statistics, Maths and Computer Science. After medicine this could give him ample scope to realize his ambition to have an attractive career. His father's friends had advised him to go in for the BSc degree with this combination. The Statistics department of Teerthankar College was the best in the entire University. When Professor Prakash took his class, boys and girls stood near the windows as the lecture theatre was always packed to capacity.

However, the general discipline at Teerthankar College was in shreds. Once an institution known for strict discipline, Teerthankar College, like several other good institutions in Dhampur, had fallen prey to the politicians' interference in the institutions of Higher education. The lowering of the voting age from twenty-one years to eighteen years had created for the politicians a great vested interest in the Student Union elections held in the Degree Colleges and the only university in the State of Madhya Khand. The lowering of the voting age was a decision of dubious value. Ostensibly, the Central govt, which introduced this change in the voting age ten years ago by bringing the Constitution (Sixty-First Amendment) Act, 1988 amending the article 326 of the Constitution, described this step as motivated by an honest intention to give greater participation to the youth of the country in the democratic process. However, the ulterior motive behind bringing in this Amendment was to use the large population of the youngsters in the Colleges and the Universities of the Country to create a large vote bank which could be utilized by the Deshwadi party that introduced this change. The logic of the Pro-lowering-age group in the party at the Centre was that the youngsters would feel a sense of gratitude towards the Deshwadi Party for giving them the franchise and would vote

* Associate Professor, Department of English, Sri Jai Narain Postgraduate College, Lucknow University, Lucknow.

in the forthcoming general elections for their candidates in huge numbers. They also pointed out to the High command that this new vote bank consisted of eighteen and eighteen-plus boys and girls who could be easily indoctrinated into supporting the Deshwadi party. Though a small section in the Deshwadi party organization at the Centre didn't buy this argument and warned the High Command against creating a Frankenstein who in the years to come could fall into the hands of those political parties who put their narrow political interest above national interest, the High Command allowed itself to be swayed by the majority in the party organization. The constitutional amendment lowering the voting age was now a reality. Other political parties were taken by surprise by this *coup d'etat* effected by the Deshwadi party and were convinced that Deshwadi Party would win in the forthcoming general elections to the Lok Sabha and in the Vidhan Sabhas of fifteen states of the Union going in for elections with hands down. After all, the Deshwadi party had now a large vote bank, vulnerable, impressionable and basking in the new found empowering tool, on their side. In the ten years since this new empowerment tool had been placed in the hands of the students, several new regional political outfits had been elected to power or thrown out of power. These new entrants into the political fold, as was feared by the minority anti-lowering-age segment in the Deshwadi party, were guided exclusively by power-interest and brazenly recruited hardened criminals into their ranks. Frequently, these criminals were given tickets. Booth capturing and intimidation of the voters ensured them victory over their opponents and they entered the Vidhan Sabhas in the States. These new regional outfits backed Student Union candidates with money and muscle power in the College and University Student Union elections. The winning candidates returned the gesture by pressurizing the students to vote in General elections for the political party that had got them elected Presidents and Secretaries of the Student Unions. Campus indiscipline was an offshoot of this. Professors and even in some cases the Vice-chancellors had to dance to the tune of these politically supported office-bearers of the Student Unions. Goons held sway on campuses; good boys and girls who came to the Colleges and the Universities for their classes cowered with trepidation.

Against this backdrop of indiscipline and general chaos on the campuses, Rohit, with ambition driving him to work hard, took admission in Teerthankar College at Dhampur. Rohit was extremely good at maths and had an acutely logical and analytical mind. He came to his classes regularly and was determined to be among the toppers in the University.

Exams were announced. His father, who had earlier been a little apprehensive whether or not Rohit, a gentle boy, would be able to pursue his studies in the present chaotic conditions at Teerthankar College, was now satisfied with his progress. He often asked Rohit about his progress in his subjects. There was perfect chemistry between Rohit and his papa.

Rohit's exam schedule began with Statistics. There was a gap of one day between all the six papers he had to write in the three subjects. This made Rohit breathe an immense sigh of relief. He was hopeful that the gap would allow him to quickly brush up the shorthand notes he had prepared for a quick revision before walking into the exam hall. He was known in the College for his special skills in Maths and Statistics at the College and Professor Prakash encouraged him in every which way. In the exam hall the scene was one of chaos and confusion. The bullies pulled out their answer sheets from the bundle without bothering about the presence of the invigilators and ignoring their allotted seats seated themselves wherever they felt convenient. As soon as the exam paper was distributed, Rohit busied himself in reading the paper. He always did this before putting pen to paper. Hardly had he opened his answer book to attempt the first question, he saw Kailash, the known goon of the College, standing before him. "So, old boy, you look very happy", laughed Kailash mischievously. Rohit didn't respond. "But first you will have to write my answer sheet. You understand that?" "Kailash bhai, how is that possible? I have my own paper to write", replied Rohit quietly. Kailash never took a no for an answer from anyone in Dhampur, leave alone his fellow students. He repeated his words firmly and a little menacingly. Fact was Kailash hardly came to any classes what with his regular attendance at the Jansatta party office in Dhampur and his other activities of a dubious nature. "Alright, Kailash bhai, I shall do your work after I have finished my paper. I shall save enough time to do your paper." Rohit tried to wriggle himself out of the impasse. But Kailash was a bully of the first waters and his association with Jansatta politicians had taught him not to take promises at their face value. He asked Rohit, this time in a menacingly threatening tone of voice to write his paper first. Rohit had no option but to oblige. Rohit did three questions in Kailash's sheet quickly. The Statistics paper melted like butter in his adept hands. He returned his answer sheet to Kailash who in the meantime had disappeared to have a pull at his favourite Capstan cigarette. In the nineties the talk about the ill effects of tobacco was not that strident as it is today. Students frequently pulled at their favourite brands in the manner of film stars from Bollywood. Kailash had mastered the art of creating spirals of smoke *a la* his favourite film star and he was always

ready to oblige his toadies among the student community with this feat. Kaiash didn't even thank Rohit for the huge favour done to him as he took this kind of thing as his due. After all, he was the President of the Student Union of Teerthankar College.

Rohit now settled down to write his own paper. He started with Question number 3 when he heard a loud tap on his table. He looked up. Who does he see? Om Prakash, Kailash's right hand, was tapping the table. "Oye Rohit, you have done bhai's work. What about me? Who will write my paper?" demanded Om Prakash. Rohit was in a dilemma. He knew if he proceeded to oblige Om Prakash too he will not be left with much time to do his own paper. But who could refuse Om Prakash, Kailash's right hand. Rohit pleaded for lack of time. Om Prakash whipped out a knife and putting it on Rohit's table threatened him with dire consequences if he said no. Rohit was too terrified to utter any words. He knew that Om Prakash was wanted in two murder cases and was notorious for demanding *hafta* from the businessmen of Dhampur. Sheepishly, he took Om Prakash's answer sheet and started doing the questions. In between the answers he would look at his wrist watch anxious that he might not have any time left for himself. When Rohit handed his answer sheet to Om Prakash, only fifteen minutes were left. Rohit put pen to paper, this time to do his own question paper. He had started doing Question no 3 before Om Prakash started tapping on his table and he quickly finished this question. But then the bell rang and the Invigilator rather snatched the answer sheet from Rohit. The two Invigilators had made themselves absent from the exam hall soon after filling the required information in the bunch of papers given to them and they returned to the hall only when the ten-minute bell struck. Terror made Invigilators quiver with fear and they acted on the belief that 'discretion' is the better part of valour.

Rohit was a sensitive and ambitious boy. His experience in the exam hall at Teerthankar College had deeply upset him. He reached home but instead of going to see his mother as was his wont in the school days during exam time, he went straight to his room and fell down on his bed. He heard his mother calling his name. He got up and went into the living room. His mother was shocked to see Rohit's face. He was weeping silently. "What happened Rohit? Is everything OK? How was the paper? Was it too tough?" mother asked several questions in one breath. Rohit didn't speak. "Beta, don't worry if the paper was tough. You can always compensate for it in the next paper." Rohit knew that his mother was a panicky type and he couldn't share his experience with her. When his father came home for

lunch he told him about the day's incident. Dr Asthana was shocked. He told his wife that he was going to the police station and would take his lunch on returning. He told Mrs Asthana not to worry as there was a minor problem at Rahul's college for which he wanted to see the Inspector. Inspector Misra knew Dr Asthana well and he asked him to submit a written complaint against the two boys and the two invigilators. Dr Asthana wrote a lengthy report and took Rohit's signatures on it. Fact was the police in Dhampur was too terrified to take any action against Kailash and his protégé Om Prakash. Inspector Misra knew that Kailash was close to a minister in the Jansatta Government.

Rahul was a studious type and the terrifying incident in the exam hall had completely shaken him. He developed an unusual degree of fear and panic and Dr Asthana had to put him on a mild doze of tranquillizers. To cut a long story short, Rohit became too terrified to even go to the College, to say nothing of entering the exam hall and writing his papers. He was in the grip of a phobia. Rohit lost a year. Outwardly, he was ok but inwardly he was sinking into despair. His father advised him to enrol himself with IGNOU. Dr Asthana hoped that IGNOU being a distant mode education university would give him relief from the pressure of attending classes and of going to the College. But Rohit panicked at the very thought of exams. His career was in a blind alley. He had to discontinue his studies. Dr Asthana advised him to open a medicine shop. He could arrange a drug licence for him. Rohit started looking after the business. But depression didn't leave him. He was put under the care of a psychiatrist.

Rohit's depression showed no signs of abatement. He lost interest in the medicine business. He was sinking deeper and deeper into depression every day. The poor boy couldn't put up with his depression for too long and one day he decided to jump into a canal and put an end to his misery.

Human Gender Relationship in the Certain Plays of Vijay Tendulkar

*R. Nagarajan**

*Dr. S. Rajarajan***

Vijay Tendulkar can be acknowledged as the precursor of modern Indian English drama. His contribution is marvelous and bulky in the development of modern dramatic sensibility. Though he didn't write much more in English, the translated work from Marathi to English is his major contribution in the development of the Indian English drama. His plays *Sakharam Binder* and *Silence! The Court is in Session* are typical examples of the expression of man woman relations.

He shows the terrible and harsh reality of man and woman in *Sakharam Binder*. It deals with the topic of male domination over female. As a man of modernism and devoid of ethics and morality, Sakharam, the hero of this play opposes the outdated social codes and conventional marriage systems as he doesn't believe in wedlock society and behaves like an outsider with the women who come into contact of him. He hates society and its laws of wedlock that is why he doesn't want any permanent partner. So he gives shelter to abandoned wives and uses them to fulfil his sexual desires. He is far away from feelings and emotions. He loads all his household duties to enslave women. Why does he behave so? Who is responsible for his cruel behaviour? I think the elements like culture; history, religion, and society around him are responsible to make him so. He was born in Brahmin society but his parents failed to civilise him. His father would beat him terribly so he ran away from his house when he was eleven years old. Being a man he had some physical desires and was impossible to live except fulfilling them. As he was against to social system, he disliked to have any wives so he began to bring abandoned women to do household duties and share his bed. Sakharam captures the strange and complex pathology and seems to want to please his "birds" even as he bullies them and who speaks like a free thinking crusader for women's rights one minute and like a philistine scornful of their devotion to him the next. Sakharam is a bookbinder who prides himself on his lack of regard for cultural dictates.

* Ph.D Research Scholar, Research & Development Centre, Bharathiar University, Coimbatore - 641 046

** Research Supervisor, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Bharathidasan Govt College for Women, Puducherry - 605 001.

Lusty and greedy, Sakharam partakes in life's pleasures and the woman in his company as a means of furthering his quotidian satisfaction. Lakshmi's fiercely religious and pious nature enflames Sakharam, and after much brutality is heaped on her, she lashes out at him verbally and is kicked out of the house. Sakharam's wildness, Lakshmi's kindness and Champa's brightness do not go side by side, and their psychology to live life does not resemble each other so their relationship failed.

The entry of Champa is really attractive. Being a wife of dismissed Fouzdar Shinde, her living style is so reach but Sakharam looks at her as the machine of fulfilling desires. She is curvy, sensuous, frank and, because she walked out on her pining husband, has the illusion of choice as a bargaining tool. Her lack of concern and disregard for Binder's instructions combined with her flirty intensity renders him speechless. The power shifts, making him glassy-eyed and useless.

However, there is nothing comic about what amounts to repeated rape scenes. Unfortunately, the sign, that Sakharam is not just hot-tempered, but sadistic put him beyond comedic redemption. His cruelty intensifies with the heat of his passion and the second act veers straight into operatic territory. The abuse now turns even nastier. Even trimming some of the fat from this curry of sexual tensions would not save Sakharam Binder from being an overly melodramatic tragedy and too mean-spirited to be the comedy with a serious underlying theme that it could have been.

"*Silence! The Court Is in Session*" is a milestone in the history of whole Marathi as well Indian English drama. Tendulkar became the centre of general controversy. He was already called the epithet of the angry young man of the Marathi theatre. The theatre group is *Silence! The Court Is in Session*, attending a mock drama, actually a mock trial of Miss Benare, which comes to perform at a village, is a miniscule cross-section of middle class society, the member representative of its different sub-strata, their character, dialogues, gestures and even mannerisms reflect their petty, circumscribed existences fraught with frustrations and repressed desires that find expression in their malicious and spiteful attitudes towards their fellow beings. Leela Benare, the central character of the play, possess a natural lust for life, she ignores social norms and dictates. Beings different from others she is easily isolated and made the victim of a cruel game cunningly planned by her co-actors. 2.1 Relationship between Co-actors and Miss Benare: During the first half of the play, Benare is able to outsmart her co-actors. She is not caught in their trap. But the second half of the play witnesses a mock trial of Benare that is actually a trial of the whole

female race in the country. It shows our hypocrisy, our double standards regarding men and women. Benare is accused of cheap conduct, of wooing men .of fulfilling her bodily needs. But the intellectual, the absent university professor .Damle who is equally a part of the bad conduct, is not at all held responsible.

Miss Benare's private life is exposed and publicly dissected, revealing her illicit love affair with Professor Damle, a married man with a family, which has resulted in her pregnancy, Interestingly, the accusation brought her at the beginning of the trail that of infanticide turns into the verdict at the conclusion, principally because contemporary Indian society with its roots grounded firmly in reactionary ideas, cannot allow the birth of a child out of wedlock. This very reversal in the attitude of the authorities expresses the basic hypocrisy and double standards on which our society is founded. It is poignant, sensitive and highlights the vulnerability of women in our society but a good thing occurred that Tendulkar received. In *Silence!* The Court is in Session Vijay Tendulkar takes the covers off a traditionalist society, to show us just what it is capable of when given the power to lord over those who live by their own rules. With a drama in a drama, the play revolves around theatre group about to perform a play in a village. As the plot thickens the comforting mist of 'pretend' starts to dissolve revealing the frustrated, bitter and jaded lives of the performers. Light years ahead of its times, *Silence...* exposes the dark side of middle class morality, where judgments are passed by the minute and silence is often the only recourse left to the defendant.

Love is the most beautiful feeling that has been created by God and the basic foundation of a relation that exists between a man and a woman is love. A Man Woman Relationship is the most beautiful relationship on this earth but there are many people who do not hesitate to insult this relationship. It should also be noted that the relationship that a man and a woman share is not devoid of complexities. Therefore to have a successful Man Woman Relationship one needs to reflect on the various aspects that are associated with the relationship of love. In both the dramas, I found how man is responsible to destroy a lovely relationship between man and woman. We find some Sakharam Binders around us who though want equal rights to man and woman, yet the wild animal wrapped in a skin of lamb in their heart doesn't allow to love women .Sakharam and Dawood, in Sakharam Binder and all co-actors in *Silence!* The court is in session think that woman is pound of flesh of them. For them, every woman is virtually her body - bones, flesh, curves! A woman is not identified with

her intellectual, her ability, her intelligence, her courage or knowledge. She is just imagined as a sex object. That is why Lakshmi and Champa in Sakharam Binder and Miss Leela Benare and Mrs. Kashikar just remain puppets in the hand of man. If we try to enrich this relationship having any lesson from these plays, the purpose of Vijay Tendulkar to be ideal men-women will be succeeded.

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Reconsidering Gender and the Republic in Shakespeare : A Comparative Study of Macbeth and King Lear

Sonia*

Literature has always been the carrier of the thoughts of society in which it originates. It unveils directly or indirectly the changing process that takes place with the passage of time. No writer can escape from the facts of social backgrounds and social consciousness, under which life is lived everywhere. Shakespeare, when writing his plays, definitely could not dissociate himself from the period he lived in. He was surrounded by the realities of everyday Elizabethan life, which he at some point rather conspicuously projected into the plays dealing with the time and place incongruous with these realities.

Moreover, the concept of empire, with its close link to concepts such as autocracy, dictatorship and power, is a subject that is widely discussed in modern society, and Shakespeare's tragedies based on Rome's late Republican and English history also discuss these topics to a significant extent. Shakespeare has often been seen as a conservative political thinker characterized by an over-riding fear of the 'mob'. Shakespeare is a versatile, fertile and suggestive author in terms of alerting society to the issue regarding women's studies, gender ideology and voice of common people. Shakespeare political culture has been seriously misinterpreted and misread by a whole variety of circles and historians which consider Shakespeare a representative of patriarchy and monarchy. Although Shakespeare reflects and at times supports the binary of women and men and their various roles and responsibilities in society, he is also a writer who questions, challenges, and modifies those representations.

Shakespeare rises above the stereotypical views of contemporary society as he portrays women as more than passive vessels. He also challenges the nature of gender itself, questioning whether nature is inherent or constructive. Shakespeare's *King Lear* and *Macbeth* both place substantial emphasis on male-female relationship, gender dynamics and republican ideas. Shakespeare did not have much faith in traditional gender roles and monarchy. His constant subversion of these roles in the submission of men to dominant women and monarch to common people illustrates Shakespeare's feelings of rebel to the society of which he is called

* Assistant Professor, Department of English, Hindu College, Sonapat

the perfect imitator. Shakespearean drama is a treasury of the disputes that frustrated and delighted humanism, including (among many others) action versus contemplation, theory versus practice, art versus nature, monarchy versus republic, human dignity versus human depravity, male versus female and individualism versus communality.

The proposed paper is an attempt to find out new gender dimensions and republican traits in his *King Lear* and *Macbeth* which has not been fully developed in the earlier studies on Shakespeare. The Oxford Dictionary defines 'Republic' as, "A country that is governed by a president and politicians elected by the people," (1288). "A system of government, which derives its power from the people rather than another basis, such as heredity or divine right. This remains the primary definition of republic in most countries," (Benerjee NP). Republicanism took many forms in early modern Europe. The Latin term republican literally meant the 'public thing', but was most frequently translated as the common weal or commonwealth. The idea of republican culture operates here as a very broad category, encompassing a wide range of political and literary concerns.

Roman Empire of Antiquity influenced throughout its expansionist policy many countries and left behind perceptible traces of its presence. Britain was one of the countries, which for certain period of time enjoyed direct influence that Romans exercised upon it. Roman presence showed itself in Elizabethan England in all the main areas of public life: in politics, religion as well as in education. However there were not a whole host of English republicans who believed the necessity of establishing an English republic in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, there were many who were influenced by Roman republican thought and its emphasis on the active virtue of the good citizen, who deserves to enjoy liberty under the protection of benign state. Shakespeare is one of the representative from this group. His works were suffused with republican values, then it begins to look as though "republicanism had set the political agenda" (Hadfield 95) for late Elizabethan England. At the same time, as Hadfield demonstrates, there is plenty in these plays that can be thought of as republican in the looser sense established in the opening chapters of the book.

Shakespeare's chief thematic aim in *King Lear* and *Macbeth* is namely to create a discussion around the concepts of tyranny, imperialism, monarchy and democracy. *Macbeth*, with its central thematic discussion of the validity of Duncan's rule, raises the following questions to the audience: is he a tyrant or a benevolent dictator? Is he the usurper of the Republic, or is he the one who is being usurped? Is his murder justified,

or is it a thoroughly vile act. The debate of tyranny is, in fact, as relevant now as it was during the Renaissance, the Roman Republic, and in fact, any age or human experience. What Shakespeare does is to focus on the debate itself rather than pass moral judgment or give clear answers, and it is up to us to make up our minds. One's moral judgment is entirely dependent upon one's point of view. As Rene Fortin writes about Juliet Caesar is true of Macbeth also : 'What has transpired in the play can best be described in terms of point-of-view strategy: the particular strategy of Shakespeare seems to involve the audience in the fallible judgments of the characters.' (Fortin 346).

King Lear is a different breed of political analysis for Shakespeare because the play focuses on a king who becomes from royal to common and come to understand the importance of common good. On the other hand in *Macbeth*, Duncan is a ruler but not a king. This play tackles how the conspirators, who are close to Duncan, take down the ruler because of a perceived sense of ambition. Brooding desires for assassination parallels how many of England's citizens felt about Queen Elizabeth I during her extensive reign. This play is an attempt to show how government falls apart quickly after the ruler is removed and what England might have faced if someone succeeded in disposing of Elizabeth. The second Earl of Essex, Robert Devereux, was perennial favorite of Queen Elizabeth I. Like Macbeth relationship with Duncan. Devereux was also subject to extreme vanity, and jealousy. The same can be said for Macbeth who was easily persuaded by witch's smooth tongue that Macbeth was a good, as Duncan to become the king (Quote from the text). Macbeth and Devereux felt that their head of state was not too powerful to continue on. Both men convinced themselves that the people they intended to represent with the political assassinations felt the same way about the situations. Robert Devereux formed a group of conspirators who planned to take down the queen in 1601. Similarly, in *Macbeth*, Macbeth plans to assassinate Duncan before his ambition is revealed. The reason for Devereux's attempt was his inability to accept that a woman was the sole head of England. Devereux's intentions were based solely on disposing of the queen he felt had ruled for too long. On the other hand Macbeth instincts fired by witches and her wife. Devereux and Macbeth also face the mob when he tries to overthrow the king. On February 8, 1601 Devereux attempted to get citizen support for his crusade by riding into town with a hundred other men with swords (Cavendish 51). But he was locked in the Tower of London, tried for treason, and later executed. The fate of the conspirators is the same in both situations.

Shakespeare makes it clear in *Macbeth* that the rebellious conspirators are not the heroes of the text. He suggests that the rebellion will destroy the government and that those who act rashly will not succeed. This was indeed a precursor to the fate of Devereux when he was executed. Shakespeare uses *Macbeth* as a platform to discuss the idea of republicanism in the face of the failing monarchy. By addressing these issues in *Macbeth*, Shakespeare appeals to an audience is grappling with the potential for a revolution. It can almost be read as a warning to those who wished to rebel against the Elizabeth government. Shakespeare suggests that the government can control the individual, but it could not stop an uncontrollable mob as experienced in *Macbeth*. Shakespeare's *Macbeth* exemplifies a change between tyrannies to republicanism. Banquo and Cordelia represent an attempt to create a utopian republican society in the wake to the assassination of so-called tyrants. Shakespeare presents multiple sides in *Macbeth* by appealing to the desire for political change and the unpredictable consequences. When the people rule the government, they have the power to make changes for good or bad. The importance of this becomes clear when the mob switches from steadfast admiration of Macbeth to unwavering reverence of Banquo. This shows how quickly society can switch from one political side to another and how the minority opinion sways the course of political action. This rhetorical and political back-and-forth is indicative of the way people feel about leaders whether in a republic or a monarchy. Now switching to the gender aspects in plays of Shakespeare. However, one can argue that Shakespeare had many meanings hidden in his plays. Like the character Elizabeth, Lady Macbeth wanted to prove that she was as good as any man. Elizabeth "promised that if God determined she should wed, should would take care to choose a spouse who would not prejudice her realm" (Warnicke 32). Elizabeth was reluctant to pick a spouse and was determined to change the accepted belief that women are emotionally, politically, and biologically inferior to men (Warnicke 30). Similarly, Lady Macbeth desires to be on an equal plane with her husband Macbeth and convinces him to kill the king and says what she would do if she were in his place: LADY MACBETH. I have given suck, and know

How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me:
I would, while it was smiling in my face,
Have pluck'd my nipple from his boneless gums
,And dash'd the brains out, had I so sworn as you
Have done to this. (Shakespeare, *Macbeth* 1.7)

Lady Macbeth removes herself from her natural femininity in the

same way that Elizabeth does by refusing to take a husband and maintaining the highest rank in England for so long. Lady Macbeth continues in this method of unsexing herself and commits suicide. In terms of Elizabeth's reign this is a potentially, although that Elizabeth said, "I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king," (Alexander n.p). Gonril and Regan in King Lear is also as strong as Lady Macbeth. Cordelia in spite of her meek and benevolent nature boldly rejects the Prince of Burgundy who wanted to marry her for the sake of dowry only, "Peace be with Burgundy! Since that respects of fortune are his love, I shall not be his wife.(King Lear1.1). Prince of France is the only person who understands the valueof her virtues:

KING OF FRANCE. Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich, being poor;
Most

choice, forsaken; and most loved, despised!
Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon:
Be it lawful I take up what's cast away.
Gods, gods! 'tis strange that from their cold'st neglect
My love should kindle to inflamed respect.
Thy dowerless daughter, king, thrown to my chance,
Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France:
Not all the dukes of waterish Burgundy
Can buy this unprized precious maid of me.
Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind:
Thou lovest here, a better where to find.(Shakespeare
King Lear 1.1)

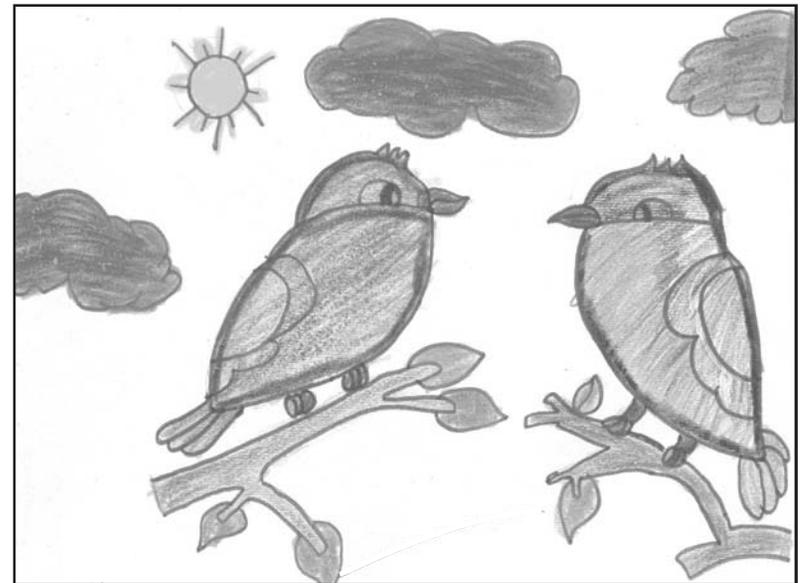
Macbeth and Lear are an adequate representation of Shakespeare's England and the struggle of a country leaning toward civil war due to the failing government headed by an elderly monarch. Shakespeare pulls from contemporary politics to appeal to his audience. His attention to political detail allows Shakespeare to become a writer associated with republican thought. Simultaneously in his treatment of gender issues Shakespeare is much ahead of his time.

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44



Prabhutee Neb

4th-B

Innocent Hearts School,
Green Model Town, Jalandhar

The Death of Humanity : A Short Story

*Puneet Soodi**

“Wake up Iqbal” the mother pulled down the blanket, trying to shake the nine year old Iqbal from his sleep.

“You’ll get late for your school. It is already eight o’clock and your school bus will be there at nine!” she shook him again.

“Mom, can I skip school today? I am so tired after staying up late at Uncle Sunil’s wedding, little Iqbal pleaded.

“No dear, your teacher says you miss too many classes. I have already packed your lunch. Off you to go to school!” the mother refused to listen.

Iqbal got up reluctantly. Rubbing his eyes, he headed towards the washroom to take a shower. He once more looked at mother expectantly if he could stay home, but his mother did not budge. He got ready. At the pace of a snail, he started walking to his bus stop, which was barely five minutes away from his house.

“Goodbye son!” waved his mother from the doorstep. She thought Iqbal could go independently now, as he had been doing so, for the past one year. Somehow, when she looked at the boy, her heart missed a beat. Unknown anxiety gripped her, but she did not pay much attention and decided to go to the temple for her daily worship. Suddenly, she heard her phone ringing. She answered it to find that Iqbal’s grandparents were coming for an early lunch. She gave up her plan to go to the temple and turned back to prepare food.

Iqbal was the only child of Sudha and Anil. He was born after five years of their marriage. The doctor had told the couple that they would not be able to have more children due to some medical complications. The fair, chubby Iqbal was apple of his parents’ eyes. His father was a wealthy businessman of a town in Haryana. He exported readymade garments to several countries. Sudha, his mother, simply lived for her son. He was her little angel, a special gift from God. His grandparents doted on him. They lived close by and visited them frequently.

Before going to the kitchen, she went to Iqbal’s room to tidy it up. She found her husband standing there, toying with Iqbal’s pillow.

“I could not say bye to him”, he said, “I was very busy with my paper work in the morning.”

“Don’t worry, he will be back by two o’ clock and then you can take him to the market. He has been asking for a racing car so badly,” Sudha smiled.

Just then, the phone rang again. Anil picked it up. “What!” he screamed and looked at his wife with horror in his eyes. It was a call from the police informing him that their son had been kidnapped by some unidentified persons as he was waiting for his school bus!

The world became suddenly dark for Sudha and Anil. Sudha fainted on the spot and Anil started making frantic calls. Bad news spreads fast. Soon, the whole town came to know about Iqbal’s unfortunate kidnapping. There were friends, relatives, people and the police. A doctor was summoned for Sudha, who was inconsolable. A report was registered and police search parties were deputed.

“Why did I send him to school today?” wailed a devastated Sudha.

Eye-witness said that Iqbal had been bundled in a black car by two masked men. There was a pall of gloom everywhere. Evening turned into pitch dark night and still there was no clue of Iqbal. A sealed envelope was recovered from near that place where Iqbal had been abducted. The kidnappers were demanding a whopping sum of fifty lac rupees.

Iqbal’s father cried, “Take my property, take my business but give me back my son!”

It suddenly occurred to him that only a month ago, his previous business partner who had gone totally bankrupt had asked him for a loan.

“Anil, can you lend me forty lac rupees? I have to pay back my debts.” Ajit had asked Anil.

“Sorry, I work very hard and just can’t give it away to anyone,” Anil’s refusal was pointblank.

“You might repent later and face dire consequences if you don’t give me the money,” Ajit threatened menacingly.

“I don’t care!” Anil decided not to listen to his threats, little knowing that by doing so, he was heading towards the worst disaster of his life.

He now started blaming himself for not listening to Ajit’s warning. He told the police about his conversation with him. The police raided Ajit’s house. He had fled away!

* Associate Professor, Department of English, A S College for Women, Khanna

After about one week, terrible news was received. Iqbal's dead body was found in the fields of a nearby village. All were stunned by this inhuman act of the kidnappers. Someone in the crowd uttered.

"How could they kill such a sweet and innocent boy?"

"May they die by inches!" someone else cursed.

It started raining heavily. The black thick clouds were shedding black tears of sorrow over the unspeakable tragedy. There were screams, shrieks and heart rending sights.

Thousands of people attended the funeral of Iqbal. Wearing sad mourning dresses they seemed to be weeping over death of humanity.

"Why did we not die in his place?" Iqbal's grandparents lamented.

The sad incident became national news. There were protests against the police. People also raised slogans demanding that the culprits should not move about scot-free. As a result, some politicians started showing interest and the culprits were arrested in about a fortnight's time. Ajit, the prime suspect was put behind the bars along with his main accomplices. Cases were registered against them.

Security was tightened around the town. Safety regulations were issued to all the schools of the area. Ajit confessed that he had thrown Iqbal in abandoned fields when the police had become alert. Forensic reports revealed that poor Iqbal had died of starvation as he lay there unconscious and unnoticed for about four days! Ajit was sentenced to life imprisonment.

"Life imprisonment serves that rascal right!" said some friends to Anil and Sudha.

"Finally you got some justice", said some relatives to the helpless parents.

There was no word called 'justice' in the vocabulary of Anil and Sudha. Fate had played a cruel joke on them. Their world became totally dark devoid of any hope. Their Sun had permanently set with the death of their beloved son!

46

Tickling Pranks

*Dr. Suresh Chandra Pande**

Blowing	As if
From neighbouring woods	Morning sun
Midst of trees	Like celestial gem
Wild mild wind	Cut back
Cluttering	from after
Fallen leaves	A light reflexion
Fluttering	Beauty bewitched
Tossing and teetering	Art thou the presence
Thy tickling pranks!	Or a semblance?
Scent soaked soil	Thy enticements
Multihued flowers	Enchanting Melodies
In maiden smile	Rhythmic reverberations
Hold dew-drops	Re-echo
on petals	Through each passage
Unfolding	Panoramas
Shimmering scintillas	Wedded to nature's
In wee little glimmer	Unending plenty
Thy tickling pranks!	thy tickling pranks!

A Quiet Debate

Dr. Suresh Chandra Pande*

He who creates–	Plus the residue
Birds and beasts	In totality–
Bees and butter flies	The one in many
Buds and blossoms	am I an empty vessel?
Creates harmony	No you are filled
In a body	with my form
Then lets it grow	Being tangible
So it grows and grows	Subject to decay
Till the goal is reached	Are you its' sure
And joy attained	In intangible form
Still an unanswered quiz	I am truly untouched
A pertinent proposition	beyond the curtain
On life and living	of material veils
Rests perspicuously persistent–	An eternal truth
Who am I?	In cyclical dynamics
A frame pruned	Appear to disappear
chiseled and nourished	Time after time
Out of material stuff	In the firmament
In diverse forms	Tucked in timelessness
Ugly or beautiful	The one ABSOLUTE
Who art thou?	Behind apparent multiplicity
A tiny spark	In blissful repose

Book Review

Geetanjali*

Ocean of Thoughts Poems about Social Issues and Human Values

By Sangeeta Mahesh
Authorspress, New Delhi
63Pages, Rs 195/-

The point and purpose of writing poetry is to give expression to that which is imperative and inexorable. Sangeeta Mahesh, in her collection of poems titled, *Ocean of Thoughts*, discusses many urgent, social ills afflicting our society today. She raises many topical issues, highlights several problems and ills in contemporary society, thereby trying to evoke the mind and soul of the reader. Obviously, she believes in poetry having a bigger purpose than merely the use of beautiful language and pretty phraseology.

The collection begins with an Invocation to Lord Ganesha to seek blessings and guidance from him. The first poem "*Ocean of Thoughts*" is an excellent start to a wonderful set of poems. The poet is in a dilemma as to which thoughts to choose first from her "ocean of thoughts" so that she can weave them into a "garland of poetry". Her inspirations, motivations, impediments of writing poetry are revealed. She goes back again to the 'Ocean' in the poem *I am the Wave in the Ocean* where she identifies herself with a "restless wave" in "search of peace and pleasure" which cannot be found "Unless and until we change our perception". Like this, as in many other poems of the collection, the poet gives us a peep into her philosophy of life. The highs and lows of life are compared to a song of different notes, to a river of shuffling waves and to a journey to various destinations in the poem *What is Life*. In *Oh the Voyager Alone*, the poet tells us that we are alone in the journey of life and that we have to find our own path. *Why Should I fear of the Tempest* tells us that "Joys always follow the sorrows in the same way/ As bright cheerful morning follows the dark night".

Significantly, the poet not only discusses the troubles and evils of society but also attempts to find solutions to triumph over them. *Wail of a Female Foetus* is a relevant poem about the cruel murder of an unborn female child. Ironically, "...it was not the man/ Who was rogue, rowdy and ruthless/ It was woman killing a woman. In a later poem, *Daughters*, the poet talks about how daughters can bring joy to one's life provided they are nurtured with "education, strength and confidence". *16 December*,

* Department of English, Government College, Phool - Chaur, Nainital (UK).

* Assistant Professor, Department of English, DAV College, Jalandhar.

A Day of Resolution is a tribute to 'Nirbhaya' the dear daughter of the nation, who was raped and killed on 16th December. Ironically, after one year, the newspaper headlines show similar heinous crimes being committed. The solution is not to confine, rather to take a resolution that "Rape criminals should get the hardest punishment. *O Humanity! Where Have You Lost?* is a powerful poem written in colloquial style. Loss of humanity can be seen in "heinous crimes of rape", "brutal acts of acid attack", innocent human beings being "butchered by other nations" for power. She ends the poem by asking, "Will it ever sing the songs of eternal joy/ Love friendship and compassion?" Then, in a later poem she says, "Let Humanity be your Religion". *Beware of Wolves* is a censure of fake priests. The poet advises, "Service to Mankind is the service to God/ Keep always this concept in your mind".

The poet's desire for a better India is also obvious. *Plight of my Motherland* is a poem dealing with the ills of the country and the need to cure her wounds. In a later poem, *Garden of Freedom*, the poet laments, "Earlier the attackers were foreigners/ But now this garden, my motherland/ Was looted and destroyed by its own children". In *Why should one starve in Free India* she says, "My India will be free when it will get Freedom .../ From hunger, poverty and malnutrition. In the poem, *The change is in the air*, the poet longs for a change in the world especially in India. She finds "the new hope, the new cheer/ In the world all over". She believes that corruption will be swept away from the country. *An Invocation to Nature* is an appeal to the stars, the clouds, the river, the moon, all the beautiful elements of nature to "bless us with your bounties and teach us harmony/ That's world's greatest pleasure"

The Universe, Manifestation of God's Art is the last poem. Mahesh praises the beautiful creations of God and contrasts them to the unholy acts of human beings. She bewails that God's "finest creature could not uphold / The onus given to him by God and advises man to "Save rivers, earth and space from pollution / To enrich the world, it's the only solution.

Ocean of Thoughts is a collection of poems in simple English written from the heart. It is a genuine expression of feelings and beliefs of the poet. A sincere effort at rousing the emotions of the readers is made in the hope to bring about change through the powerful medium of poetry. Although, it is true that Indian prose writers make more news than their poetic peers, a collection of poems such as the one under consideration reflects the vibrant contemporary poetry culture of India. It is also an indication of an effervescent faction of women poets writing in English.

48

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