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A Feminist Study of Philip Roth's *When She Was Good**Dr. Balbir Singh**

When Philip Roth's novel *When She Was Good* was published in 1967, it received the least attention as compared with his other books. Initially, the novel was criticized by many critics as banal, dull, "laboured" and "lifeless".(Tanner 1971:312). Hermione Lee calls it the "most uncharacteristic and uninspired of his books" in which the writer has tried, though unsuccessfully, to portray the Midwestern Gentile milieu (1982:63). But now that the critical opinion of Roth's fiction is well established, it is considered to be one of his greatest novels. Some critics even consider it a kind of contemporary document depicting the American social reality which, in Roth's opinion, is difficult to express because of its absurdity and grotesqueness. Roth asserts time and again in his essays and interviews that the artist's purpose is to arouse moral awareness of the reader through depiction of contemporary social reality.

In *When She Was Good*, Roth explores interpersonal relationships in family and society and presents the clash between the ethical values of a young woman and those of her male dominated society. Except his autobiographical book, *Patrimony*, nowhere is Roth more concerned with the theme of parents-children relationship as in this novel. George J. Searles rightly remarks that *When She Was Good* is a "probing exploration of family tensions"(1985:39). It is a psychological fact that in her family the female child is particularly attached to her father who is her main source of moral and emotional security. Lucy's relationship with her father and mother is certainly the pivotal point of the novel. Having grown up in a broken family where her wayward father tortures her tender, timid and subservient mother, she is mortified by alienation and emotional insecurity. In her anger and resentment she gets her father arrested by the police and on another occasion she bolts him out of the house. As Roth himself admits in *Reading Myself and Others*, *When She Was Good* and *Portnoy's Complaint* deal with the same theme of "warfare between parents and children"(1975:26). The difference in these two novels is superficial inasmuch as Portnoy is rallying against his Jewish milieu while Lucy's rage is against the value system of a patriarchal Midwestern Protestant society.

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While examining female characters in Roth's fiction, Mary Allen comes down heavily on Lucy. In her essay "When She Was Good She Was Horrid" she brands her as a kind of despicable monster:and calls her "one of the super bitches of the sixties"(1986:141).Her charge is outright unacceptable. Lucy's refusal of abortion of her unborn child is totally justified and even testifies to her concern for sanctity of human life. As a woman she is angry with her father and husband who are the main pillars of support for a woman. She sufficiently demonstrates the kind of problems faced by women even in the west which is known for liberty, justice and equality for women. In the face of rowdyism of his drunken father, what alternative had she but to call for the police? Fewwesterners have the first hand knowledge of what the women in the third world have to tolerate as wife, daughters and mothers. Ginny, Lucy and her mother are typical examples of suppression and victimization at the hands of their male protectors. Though not well acquainted with eastern way of life, Philip Roth is all sympathy for such women. This is again because of his firm belief in humanitarian values. Admittedly, Lucy has her shortcomings, but more often than not her reactions are a by-product of her family upbringing. Can her refusal to abort her unborn child label her as a bitch in the twenty first century? In fact, if she goes in for an abortion nowadays she would certainly be called a foeticidal fiend. And Allen's charge that she is revengeful is also not tenable. She is actually trying to have a happy, secure family with a responsible hard working husband and children. There is nothing immoral or revengeful in these innocent wishes of a young woman who herself had been deprived of emotional security in her father's [actually her maternal grandfather's] home. Despite his best intentions Willard Carroll is an ineffectual head of the family and Lucy's accusation in the last part of the novel that he is an "impotent and helpless man," though the outcry of an anguished soul, has some grain of truth in it (Roth 1970:294. Subsequent references to this book are indicated by page numbers). For her father she has Whitey, a "no-good low-life weakling" who is a parasite on Willard and instead of supporting his family squanders his time and money drinking in Earl's Dugout (40). Ironically, in the house of his father-in-law whose sole commitment in life is to civilized behavior, Whitey inflicts violence against his own daughter. Whitey does not even remotely resemble the typical father – figure in Roth's fiction, who is generally a self-sacrificing and responsible person. Still, his wife Myra tolerates his wayward behavior submissively and never grumbles or revolts against him. Lucy cherishes the idea of a perfect family in which men are expected to discharge their

duties and responsibilities dauntlessly. Having grown up in the forties, she wishes for an ideal family where the men and women play their specified roles. Allen concedes that Roth avers "character" in Lucy but she fails to find "genuine goodness" in his heroines (1986:146). What is character if it is not goodness? Or by goodness Allen means the slavish subservience of a woman always at the beck and call of her male master?

As if her father and grandfather were not enough for her, she chooses Roy as her husband who, ironically, turns out to be exactly the kind of man she abhors vehemently. (Her choice is, again, deliberate as in her opinion true love demands constancy and commitment to one's lover). Roy is a lazy and immature person who seems to be unable to bear the burden of his wife and child and runs away to his uncle Julian for emotional support on every occasion. Thus, Lucy's hopes of an ideal man in her life are shattered: "And yet it was what she had prayed for all her life – that a man stern, serious, strong and prudent would be the husband of her mother, and the father to herself" (228). It is not my intention to negate the enthusiasm of the feminists and their assertion of self-reliance and freedom of women. Simone de Beauvoir is right in her observation that a woman is a woman not because of her birth but due to the cultural traits accumulated through successive generations. But this cultural propensity to dependence on men may be rather deep rooted if the whole process of evolution is taken into consideration. Here it will be worthwhile to consider a recent study and its findings, surprising though they may appear to the postmodern feminists. Nick Neave, an evolutionary psychologist, reveals that not only do women need men, they are also fundamentally programmed to depend on them. She says, "Though feminists may argue this, in evolutionary terms the huge cultural changes over the past generation amount simply to the mere blink of an eye. It could take another 10000 years for women to change their thinking. Quite simply, women are pre-programmed to feel dependent on men. Even today, women may be richer and enjoying all the trappings of success, but deep down they fear that they can't survive alone" (2006:1). So it is not unnatural on Lucy's part to expect devoted and responsible men in her life.

Given her dauntless and rigid temperament, Lucy refuses to be a "victim" like her mother and unintentionally appears in the role of a "rebel" (Hassan 1961:31): "But she hated suffering as much as she hated those who made her suffer, and she always would" (84). She even tries conversion to Catholicism and "dedicated herself to a life of submission, humility, silence and suffering" till the incident when her father in a drunken

state throws away the pan of water in which her mother was soaking her feet (81). And then "after calling upon Saint Teresa of Lisieux and Our Lord – and getting no reply – she called the police" (81). Sanford Pinsker compares Lucy to the heroine of *Madame Bovary* in her illusory concept of reality. But the comparison appears rather far-fetched. Madame Bovary is more like Helen in *The Professor of Desire*, who runs from one romantic relation to another. Even Roy admits that he preferred Lucy to other ordinary girls because of her noble character. In fact, the choices before her are limited: either to follow her ideals of ethical principles defying all the familial and social exhortations or to conform to the patriarchal value system of her immediate society in the 1950s and consequently deny herself the possibility of self-fulfillment. Without much hesitation she chooses the former and resists staunchly the forces of ruthless male domination, little realizing the inevitable consequences of ignoring the pragmatic compulsions of the recognizable social world. In her assertion of simplistic notions of moral rectitude, she fails to see the essential truth Father Damrosch preaches to her: "The world is imperfect... Because we are weak, we are corrupt. Because we are sinners. Evil is the nature of mankind" (291).

Roth makes extensive use of irony in the portrayal of Lucy's complex personality. In the beginning of the novel, Lucy is projected as the good girl of the traditional nursery rhyme but as the novel progresses Roth makes more and more use of irony till the last part when she assumes the role of a rebel. Through the deft maneuvering of his narrative perspectives, Roth unfolds her character in such a way that just before her death she appears an obsessive maniac retaining, at the same time, reader's sympathy, and, perhaps, her creator's. To bring her moral stance in sharp focus, Roth in the first section of the book juxtaposes her goodness, honesty and courage with the passivity of Willard, irresponsibility of Whitey, utter submissiveness of her mother, and immaturity and waywardness of her husband, Roy.

Though her impatience with evil is discernible in the novel as early as when she calls the police to arrest her drunken father, the full force of her egotism is felt in the third section of the novel. After returning to Fort Kean from their visit to their parents, Lucy gives vent to her disgust for her husband:

You worm! Don't you have any guts at all? Can't you stand on your own two feet, ever? You sponge! You leech! You weak, hopeless, spineless, coward! You will

never change – you don't even *want* to change! You don't even know what I *mean* by change! (264).

Some critics are of the opinion that Lucy is an embodiment of the typical American destructive female character, a “ball-breaker of a bitch” (279) as Julian calls her. For these critics the persons living in small towns and villages either of America or of the rest of the world – in fact, outside the metropolitan affluence – have “narrow morality” (Allen 1986:144). This elite kind of feminism is sadly confined to the comfort and freedom of the bourgeois prosperous life. But when evaluated against the social and moral background of the Fifties, it is evident that Lucy's conflict has much to do with the normative value system of a small Midwestern town – Liberty Center. Her firm belief in the familiar myth prevalent in the mid-century American society of the perfect family with clearly defined masculine and feminine roles distorts her vision of the contemporary social reality. Keeping in view the moral ambience of the Fifties when the watchwords for the young generation were duty, responsibility and manhood, it is not surprising for a girl like Lucy to insist obsessively on these premium virtues.

At the tender age of eighteen when she is lonely and isolated, Lucy is seduced by Roy in *Passion Paradise* in most banal and unromantic circumstances. She insists on marrying him despite her parents' advice to have an abortion. Even some contemporary critics think that this only proves her rigidity and obstinacy. In these days of general opposition and moral abhorrence to female foeticide their views look rather ridiculously inhuman. It is ironical, and even tragic, that Lucy chooses for her husband the kind of male she dislikes most – immature, irresponsible and weak. Surprisingly enough, even before her marriage Lucy is certain that he is not a suitable person as a husband. In making her choice of marrying a person of Roy's character, she irrevocably plunges herself in a miserable condition. Irritated by his naive escapism, she wonders: “Who, after all, was Roy Bassart that he should feel no pain? Who was Roy Bassart that he should live a privileged existence? Who was Roy Bassart to be without responsibilities? This was not heaven. This was the world!” (271). Mary Allen observes: “In marrying Roy Bassart a kind and dreamy boy, she is in a position to demonstrate fully her scorn of such weakness” (1986:41). Roy is not merely “dreamy” but a day dreaming drifter who shuns his responsibilities as a husband and father.

In the last section of the novel when Lucy is engaged in an all out war with the anti-feminine forces, Roy fails miserably to come to her

rescue. Taking their child Edward with him he runs away to Uncle Julian and leaves her alone to fend for herself and her unborn child (she is pregnant for the second time). Roth's sympathy, though implicit, is with Lucy, as nowhere in his fiction does he approve of uncivilized behavior of a character in howsoever trying circumstances he may be. Notwithstanding his consistently sustained narrative distance from the protagonist, Roth undoubtedly presupposes the reader's sympathy with Lucy when she, in the very presence of her husband, is waging a lonely battle against Julian who stands for stark male hegemony: “Her husband, who should be protecting her! defending her! shielding her! guarding her! instead stood between herself and her child, herself and her home, between herself and the life of a woman!” (285).

But contrary to her expectations, Roy chooses to become a part of the ruthless patriarchal system and leaves her in the lurch. Driven into a corner, Lucy loses all hopes of help from outside and fights alone against the physical force of Julian and Roy. Significantly, the plot has come full circle, from Willard's commitment to civilization in the opening sentence of the novel to violence against a pregnant woman by her male relatives.

Lucy decides not to be a victim like her mother Myra who tolerates patiently the injustice and even physical violence at the hands of her husband and still protects him on all occasions. Moreover, she expects Lucy to follow her suit. But Lucy firmly determines that “she would not repeat her mother's life, nor would her offspring repeat her own” (200). As quoted in Granville Hicks (1967:25), Roth says about his conception of the character of his protagonist: “As I remember it, what most intrigued me at the outset was the utter victimization of this girl, whose misfortune it was to have been born into a world to which she believed herself morally superior.” No doubt, she is “morally superior” inasmuch as she is conscious of her rights as a woman. Having made her choice not to follow her mother and be a victim, she embarks upon a mad crusade against what she believes injustice and evil around her. Ultimately, convinced of the righteousness of her ethical code she is outraged at others because of their reluctance to conform to that code: “I am their superior in every single way! People can call me all the names they want – I don't care! I have nothing to confess, because I am right and they are wrong and I will not be destroyed!” (84).

On the surface level, Lucy resembles Gabe's mother who strives all her life to be “*Very Decent to People*” and is obsessed with the idea of goodness (Roth 1972:2). She reflects: “There were principles to be

honored, values to respect, that went beyond blood relationships; but apparently they had no more knowledge of what it meant to be human than did her own family" (269-270). In the last part of the novel she finds herself in the typical predicament of a rebel woman – lonely but defiant. She is isolated from her community, family, parents, grandparents, husband and – if Roy's accusation is to be believed – from her own child, Edward, who is unwilling to live with her. Just like the typical postmodern "rebel-victim" (Hassan 1961:31) hero, she is imprisoned in her own egotistic cell: "Why would he [Roy] come to her aid, when even those closest to her had turned against her? No, there was only one person she would rely upon; it was now as it had always been – the one to save her was herself" (304).

She is determined to take on the whole patriarchal world single-handedly. Realizing the irreconcilable nature of the constituent elements of her conflict, she attacks all those around her. In her hallucination she first curses her father, then her husband and lastly all men who are, in her opinion, the perpetrators of evil. Her last words display her simplistic but firm faith in her notions of right and wrong: "For they are wrong, and you are right, and there is no choice: the good must triumph in the end!" (307).

The three female characters in the novel – Myra, Berta and Eleanor – may be viewed as three different points of reference for the purpose of focusing on the predicament of Lucy. Myra, in sharp contrast to Lucy, suffers all the injustice, cruelty and violence perpetrated by her husband; still, she tolerates her misfortune stoically. Her faith in his love is firm and unshakable. On the other hand, Berta is a down-to-earth, prudent and pragmatic woman who believes in social conformity. She enjoys a comfortable and secure life under the protection of her rich and powerful husband. Ellie reminds us of Brenda, a shallow and romantic girl who lives complacently in the material comforts provided by her father's millions. In Lucy's opinion she is "a vain and idiotic child" always thinking only of her hair, clothes and shoes (283). In the last crucial scene, instead of showing any sympathy for her old friend Ellie calls her "crazy" and "insane" (282). She belongs to that group of women who under the garb of normalcy and decorum side with the male members of society in victimization of other women. Roth deliberately presents all these characters in the last section when Lucy madly attempts to retrieve her son from Julian's house. The last chapter which is a kind of epilogue is entitled "Innocent". The word is highly suggestive as at this stage Lucy,

totally alienated from all human communication, wages her lonely battle in a state of schizophrenia just before her tragic end. In a way, the author categorically announces his moral verdict on the struggle and fate of Lucy. He also suggests that moral rectitude when pursued beyond a certain point itself proves a grave threat to individual as well as the social milieu which nourishes him.

In *When She Was Good* Roth analyses the problem of ethical dilemma in feminist terms. Significantly, he does not attempt to categorize his characters in watertight compartments of good and evil or masculine and feminine; rather, he prefers to present all available alternatives. Lucy is undoubtedly projected as a tragic figure who undauntedly resists the forces of male chauvinism till the end. Apparently, her notions of feminine rights in the milieu of limited moral freedom prevent her from grasping and accepting the complexity of social reality and human nature. Particularly in her interpersonal demeanor she develops a kind of rigidity and obstinacy that ultimately proves her nemesis. She staunchly adheres to her idea of truth, duty and goodness. So far so good; but she also expects others to tread her path of virtue. All these factors combine to bring about her tragedy in the end.

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Existential Humanism and Postmodern Deference: Paul Auster's *The Book Of Illusions* (2002)

*Dr. Ravinder Singh**

The Book of Illusions is written as an autobiography of the narrator which he intends to publish after his death. It is an exploration of an extraordinary grief, possibilities and ways of living a life after a catastrophic loss. Zimmer survives his wife and two sons and negotiates with the rest of life; Hector, after laden with the guilt of being instrumental in the death of his pregnant beloved Brigid O' Fallon, rolls down the lanes and by lanes of existence. *The Book of Illusions* is a fictional autobiography of the narrator Prof David Zimmer who is a professor of English in an arts college in Vermont. The story begins from June 7, 1985 when the narrator loses his wife and two sons in an air crash sending him into an isolated and catatonic state of drinking and watching TV. What makes him to restart his life again is a small fit of laughter he finds himself in after he comes across a comic scene from a Hector Mann's silent movie something that made him realize that there is still something that wants to live. Zimmer's accidental encounter with Hector Mann's Silent comic movie ignited a glimmer of life inside him. Therefore, he decided to write a book on Hector Mann's film without being particularly interested in films. He travels in whole of Europe and America to collect and study only 12 movies of Hector Mann from the Silent era and writes and publishes a book *The Silent World of Hector Mann* in March 1988. Hector had made these movies during his short stay in Hollywood from 1923 to 1929 after which he had disappeared from the scene, a riddle which no one including Zimmer can solve.

Auster moulds his characters as moral beings who invent their personal moralities and sticking to them helps them to ascertain the meanings of their actions, both right and wrong. By giving his characters choice, Paul Auster attempts to give shape and form to the otherwise amorphous and confused contemporary experience besides making his characters to "oppose the disillusioning reality with the vision of their own choice." (Robert Hipkiss, 3). Auster seems to be concerned with giving a working sense to the malaise called post-modernism and "feels an obligation to bring back selected values, but in a way that recognizes the ruptures caused by the postmodern." (Hans Bertens and Joseph Natoli, 280). Auster's protagonists are modernist objects who live

lives with an acute awareness of their existential abandonment. In the face of utter hopelessness and absence of any absolute values and props to cling to, the protagonists know that the burden of choice rests squarely on their own shoulders. Their action is the only proof of their self-consciousness that fashion their life and of those who concern them.

Chance plays a crucial role in the work of Paul Auster. Prof Zimmer's narrative about his own life is interspersed with the phrases like 'If not for... would have been', 'Had it not been... would have' etc. the accidental death of Zimmer's life and his two children, his discovery of Hector Mann, his journey into and outside of the lives of Hector Mann, Alma Grund, Frieda Spelling is a zigzag steeple chase of one chance encounter or the other. The life of Hector Mann, the chief protagonist of *The Book of Illusions*, also epitomises an odyssey steered by accidents and coincidences Brigid O'Fallon would not have been killed accidentally by Hector's fiancée Dolores Saint Johns if the tire of Hector's blue DeSoto had not gone flat on the night of January fourteen, 1929.

One is reminded of the incident in *Tess of the D,Urbervilles* when the letter written by Tess to Angel Clare containing the account of her being already married to Alec gets slipped under the mat as she pushes it under the closed door of his room. After burying Brigid O'Fallon's dead body 'into the mountains north of Malibu', Hector disappeared from the scene leaving Saint John and disguising himself to escape arrest. "By the time Hector walked into Central Station,... his moustache was already gone. He disguised himself by removing his most identifiable feature, transforming his face into another face through a simple act of subtraction." (BOI, 143) He further transforms himself by taking on a new name that was Herman Loesser after the "name written out in ink along the back of the interior leather band" of a cap that he found kept in a public bathroom at the central railway Station at New York.

The only truth of "immediate self-consciousness" on the basis of which, Auster's protagonists as existentialists operate, meets with the utter disappointment when their "truth" goes on being illusive. Paul Auster's novels, especially *The Book of Illusions* is an attempt to grasp the ungraspable, that is, the *real*. "The elusiveness and resistance of the signified and the deferral and inadequacy of the signifier mark the context in which Auster and his characters construct narratives" (Hans Bertens and Joseph Natoli,., 24) The title of the novel becomes apt in the light of the novelistic concerns undertaken by Paul Auster. Nothing is absolutely authentic or certain, yet the protagonists

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negotiate with the circumstances and conditions plausible at human level. Auster goes on to understand that life cannot be lived on the basis of pre-established and pre-conceived morals or ideas: anything substantial can only be said about a life once it has been lived. *The Book of Illusions* is a maze of biographies and autobiographies that “explicitly recognize[s] its own futility, accepting the fragmentary and essentially mysterious nature of [their] subject, and yet the project must be attempted” (Hans Bertens and Joseph Natoli, 20) A conversation between Hector Mann and Mr. O’ Fallon authenticates Auster’s existential stance:

“Do You Believe in God”

“ No I do not. I believe that man is the measure of all things. Both good and bad.” (BOI, 174)

Owing to the responsibility of his having been a sole reason for the death of pregnant. Brigid O’Fallon, Hector Mann starts on a never-ending journey of extreme self denial and excruciatingly painful self-inflictions. At a stage during the resolution of his corruption, Hector becomes a masked pornstar only as an attempt to demean and denigrate himself: “squalor has its own rewards, Hector said, purposely talking over her head. If a man decides to crawl into his tomb, who better to keep him company than a warm blooded woman? He dies more slowly that way, and as long as his flesh is joined to her flesh, he can live off the smell of his own corruption.”(BOI 181). As true existentialists, Auster’s protagonists take the onus of their actions, thereby, own the subsequent consequences thereon as the outcome of their own choice. It may happen in the form of carrying a guilty conscience and punishing themselves through self-torture and self-affliction. Assuming that there are no bullets in the gun and that Alma knew the facts, Zimmer pulled the trigger of a loaded gun place on his temple; when the trigger could not be pulled, what Zimmer discovered, to his surprise and awe, that gun was loaded but the safety catch was on. Pondering over this event, Prof Zimmer says that “The world is full of holes, tiny apertures of meaninglessness, microscopic rifts that the mind could walk through, and once you were on the other side of one of those holes, you were free of yourself, free of your life, free of your death, free of everything that belonged to you.”(BOI-109)

As a piece of literary arte-fact, *The Book of Illusions* follows the aesthetics of existentialism because it places its protagonists in real life situations and examines their behavior. In this context, Steven Earnshaw rightly states: “Taken as a whole the rich texture and density of Existential writing is

not an aesthetic affectation ; it is part of each philosopher’s attempt to render their thinking and experiences in a way which is a proper realization of those ideas, sensations and events.”(10). The feeling of alienation mixed with an overwhelming wonder at the ‘thisness’ of the world and self” becomes *sonum bonum* of Paul Auster’s fictional matrix. Both Hector and Zimmer, more so Hector, fit into the defining aspects of existential living and experience such as ‘Awakening’, ‘After the Awakening,’ , ‘Finitude’, ‘The Humans’ as delineated by Steven Earnshaw in his much acclaimed critique called *Existentialism; A Guide for Perplexed* (2006). Every individual, before the point of awakening, lives an unthinking life of ‘every man’, veritably described by Steven Earnshaw as “individual’s awakening to the exigencies of existence”.(11)

The act of Hector’s going into disguise and getting a new name was an act of making himself a nonentity, a permanent act of nothingness, of becoming the other. This split into the other gave Hector a chance of looking at his own ‘self’ from a distance objectively, a chance to understand and absolve it. The text reads that Hector “learned how to look at himself from a distance, to see himself first of all as a man among other men, then as a collection of random particles of matter, and finally as a single speck of dust- and farther he travelled from his point of origin- the closer he came to achieving greatness.”(BOI,147) Thereafter, Hector decided to go to Spokane, the city to which Brigid belonged. This came as another chance of torturing himself, an act of self-imposed punishment. Further, more he goes on the journey of self-torture more does he become conscious of the brazenness of his actions that had lead to the death of Brigid O’ Fallon. For Sartre and Heidegger, “the aim of the awakened self is to take responsibility for the self, to be authentic and live in this potential, unrealized state, rather than slipping into the comforts of the ready-made ideas and habits of the ‘they’, or slipping into belief that the self can become a ‘true self’, as if the matter of self could be settled once for all” Steven Earnshaw, 18) Justifying the self-inflicted excruciatingly painful punishment, Hector recounts that “You don’t drive an innocent girl insane, and you don’t make her pregnant, and you don’t bury her dead body eight feet under the ground and expect to go on with your life as before. A man who done what he had done deserved to be punished. If the world wouldn’t do for it, then he would have to do it for himself.”(BOI,145-46) Then began the course of torturing himself to the extreme both physically and spiritually. He made himself as uncomfortable as possible. Over laden by the burden of guilt, Hector spends rest of his life in a ranch where he makes movies in a privately constructed studio, hidden from the world outside. These movies explore the existential questions vis-a-vis

Hector's own life, the death of Brigid O' Fallon being at the centre. They also raise questions about creativity, philosophy, love, life and death, the discussion of all of which is not possible within the scope of the paper. Hector makes movies for himself, all of which, as per the will, are supposed to be destroyed within twenty four hours of his death; their existence should be coterminous with his own. He exercises the existential freedom and makes his life a kind of 'project' he achieves unto himself. As a true existentialist, he remains aware of the 'finitude' of life, therefore, lives to the maximum potential of his 'self' finally giving it a final meaning. In this, he brings back Brigid O' Fallon back to life by devoting whole of his creative gamut to her. If Hector Mann brings Brigid O' Fallon back from the dead by making movies on an isolated ranch only to be destroyed after his death, Zimmer brings his wife and two sons back to life by writing this book. Similarly, Alma wants to write Hector Mann's biography to bring back her dead parents back to life.

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3

Salman Rushdie's *Shame* as a Feminist Discourse: Path from Shame to Violence

Dr. Jasleen Kaur Nanda*

Shame (1983) is a novel that analyses various aspects of shame and shamelessness which are an inevitable consequence of violence, injustice and dirty politics. The three sisters Chhunni, Munnee and Bunny are an embodiment of shame which they determinedly and successfully hide behind the walls of 'Nishapur'. Their father was a shameless man who never hesitated in voicing his hatred against them and the world around him. After his death, shame had become an unspoken part of the lives of three sisters. They confined themselves to the self-imposed imprisonment inside the infinite mansion in order to maintain their distance from the unknown world, as if they wanted to remain happy within themselves and their self created world.

The three sisters decided to share their shame equally and gave birth to a son whose father's identity was kept a secret. They even shared the symptoms of pregnancy among each other so that no one could come to know about the real mother. Omar Khayyam never came to know about his father and he began his life in the fortress of his three mothers. After twelve years, he was allowed freedom outside the house at one condition that he would never let shame enter his mind. 'Shameless' Omar Khayyam started his journey in the outside world with the knowledge of books that he had gained inside 'Nishapur'. With his power to hypnotize others, he hypnotized bold Farah Zoroaster and made her pregnant. Her womb began to swell and she was expelled from school for bringing shame upon the school. She was also thrown out of the house by her father. The journey of Omar Khayyam towards his own destruction had also begun as he was under the spell of shamelessness.

The hidden shame of the three sisters took another form in Bilquis who openly spoke about many things that brought shame to her. Rushdie points out that the status of a woman in a society is a direct outcome of her status at home. Bilquis's husband, Raza Hyder, was considered to be a good man as he did not beat his wife which was a normal ritual by other husbands. Bilquis's sister-in-law Rani said, "A good man can go bad, like meat, if you do not keep him cool" (76). When Bilquis became pregnant,

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Raza Hyder was determined that only a son would take birth. The birth of a daughter was out of question and was like an insult to the family. When he was informed about his 'defeat' that a daughter had taken birth, he could not believe his ears. Sufiya Zinobia took birth as a 'wrong miracle'. She came into existence with hatred dissolved in the air around her. Immediately after her birth, she blushed with shame.

Iskander Harappa brought shame to his wife Rani as he was among those men who need to spice up their lives with extramarital affairs. Rani Harappa mutely accepted her fate and defeat and thought that "A woman becomes looser after having a child..." (94). On the other side Sufiya Zinobia became the shame of her parents by being a girl. She became a brain-damaged child after contracting a kind of brain fever. Her diseases in the novel are a manifestation of shame as she has no other outlet to it. Consequently, her body lacks in immunity and easily catches infections. Bilquis is heart-broken as she had expected a heroic son according to the demands of society and had instead got an idiot girl. Rushdie stresses upon the idea:

Between shame and shamelessness lies the axis upon which we turn; meteorological conditions at both these poles are of the most extreme, ferocious type. Shamelessness, shame: the roots of violence. (115-6)

In a shocking incident, a father murdered his daughter because by having relationship with a white boy, she had brought dishonour upon her family. In another incident, a girl became extremely violent when while travelling on an underground train she was attacked by a group of teenage boys. She thrashed those boys with incredible strength. Sufiya Zinobia carried the shame of all such girls inside her. She grew out of the corpse of the murdered girl and also carried the soul of the violent girl. She embodied shame as well as violence and these dominant features of her personality demonstrated their most extreme forms at different times.

Simone de Beauvoir argues in *The Second Sex* (1949) that the outbursts of violence in young girls arise from depths of resignation. She cannot affirm or impose herself like boys and this fills her heart with revolt. "There is desperation in her rage; when provoked she breaks glasses, window-panes, vases – not indeed to conquer fate, but simply by way of symbolic protest" (Beauvoir 377). Neurotic symptoms in a young girl occur because of ambivalence of desire and dread. Such an attitude may also express hostility to her mother.

Sufiya's mind grew much slower than her body and that trait made her pure in the midst of a dirty world. Instead of becoming a part of the corrupt world, she kept herself isolated from it. She longed for love and affection but instead groans and insults were showered on her. As a result, abnormalities became part of her life and she started blushing like petrol fire. She blushed and her body burned at every shameful act. This was her body's reaction against accumulated emotions. Her parents were unable to solve the mystery behind these 'redenings'. "Sufiya Zinobia Hyder blushed uncontrollably whenever her presence in the world was noticed by others. But she also, I believe, blushed for the world" (122). Shameless Omar Khayyam and shameful Sufiya Zinobia got married. Instead of Sufiya, the Parsee ayah bore the child of Omar Khayyam.

Anger and disgust in Sufiya grew stronger and her shame turned completely into violence. The first incidence of violence came into light when she sleepwalked at night and went to the adjacent plot where turkeys were kept by their neighbour. That night she killed two hundred and eighteen turkeys. "Sufiya Zinobia had torn off their heads and then reached down into their bodies to draw their guts up through their necks with her tiny and weaponless hands" (138).

In the novel, degradation of human values has been highlighted through various manifestations of shame. Parents who detest a girl child due to their desire for a male child are shown to be always against nature. They bring shame into this world and breed violence. Oppression of innocent citizens by corrupt politicians is another aspect of shame in the novel. The tribals complain that government takes their rice for Army troops and none is left for them. Government mines their minerals and economy gets a boost but they are left with no money. Their frustration turns into violence in the same manner as Sufiya's shame turns into violence. "What seems certain is that Sufiya Zinobia, for so long burdened with being a miracle-gone-wrong, a family's shame made flesh, had discovered in the labyrinths of her unconscious self the hidden path that links *sharam* to violence; and that, awakening, she was as surprised as anyone by the force of what had been unleashed" (139).

Jo Vellacott, in her 1982 work, "Women, peace, and power," links violence with resourcelessness. If a member of an oppressed minority has no way of expressing dissatisfaction, he turns to terrorism. A dictator becomes violent when he cannot force others to do what he wants. A woman resorts to violent ways when she is in an authoritarian marriage situation and feels helpless and inferior. A child becomes violent after facing

outbursts of rage by his parents. Whenever there is dominance, manipulation or oppression by powerful people, the people in subordinate positions turn to violence. In the end of the novel *Shame*, guilty Omar Khayyam is standing in his room when his wife Sufiya Zinobia comes to kill him. "... as he stood before her, unable to move, her hands, his wife's hands, reached out to him and closed" (286).

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4

Patriarchy and the Politics of Power in Vijay Tendulkar's *Kanyadaan*

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Since man-woman relationship informs the basic structure of a society, mutual cooperation, love, understanding and reciprocity are expected from both sides. However, this mutual relationship degenerates into power as one, i.e. man tries to dominate the other, i.e. a woman. Consequently such a society, based exclusively on power-system, always relegates women to subservient roles. Male patriarchal society, influenced by socially invested power in itself, never conforms to the positive traits that a woman is associated with. It denies them any status of human beings. A woman is meted out ill-treatment not only in her household but also in larger public sphere. As Marlyn French notes, "The personal is the political...the value structure of a culture is identical in both public and private areas, that what happens in bedroom, and vice-versa, and that mythology notwithstanding, at present the same sex is in control of both places" (442). Earlier, women thought that their oppression in the home was the result of their fate but later on a consciousness dawned on them that the gender-specific discrimination was a part of the larger power system which operates from everywhere to subdue women. The subordination and devaluation of women, based on exaggerated biological gender difference, resulted in the binaries of male superiority and female inferiority, created by patriarchal power system.

Tendulkar's *Kanyadaan* focuses on the intersection of patriarchy and marriage as the two modes of exerting power in the realm of sexual politics. The play reveals the manner in which such oppressive power based structures overlap and reinforce each other. The intercaste marriage of Jyoti Devalikar belonging to an educated, progressive, Brahmin family to Arun Athavale, a struggling writer and poet from a downtrodden, illiterate, dalit family constitutes the central event of the play. This particular event helps in unravelling the masked hypocrisy and patriarchal hegemony affecting Jyoti's life.

In the play, Nath Devlikar, Jyoti's father, being head of family gives away his daughter in marriage to a person hardly known to him. He does

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not show any sign of mature and responsible behaviour towards his daughter because he does not bother to inquire about his would be son-in-law. When Nath meets Arun for the first time, he does not care to ask any practical questions; their talk is in fact one-sided where the former is merely exalted by the very thought of his daughter marrying a Dalit. Although Arun is Jyoti's choice for a husband, yet a marriage here is an offering, in the most literal sense, made by her father at the altar of his socialism. The parental concern for a daughter's happiness is totally missing and in this case as in many Indian marriages, "Daughters are not individuals in their own right but merely pawns in the male game of consolidating power. At best they are 'gifts' for exchange." (Singh 49). In fact, Nath foresees a golden opportunity in the inter-caste marriage of his daughter to prove the successful implementation of his socialist ideas in his personal life. He is least bothered about the financial position, social status and character of the boy his daughter has chosen to marry, although these parameters are usually considered necessary in the selection of life-partner for one's children in the Indian society. Nath tries to be dominant on one hand and progressive and modern on the other in forcing his daughter to marry Arun. He is thrilled by the very thought and proudly tells his wife, "... until today 'Break the caste system' was a mere slogan for us. I've attended many inter-caste marriages and made speeches. But today I have broken the caste barrier in the real sense" (23). Here we find that a father in order to enrich his prestige in society and to get fame and power does not hesitate to sacrifice his daughter. Marriage becomes a means for Nath to fulfil his motives.

Although Nath claims to be a socialist and democrat even inside his home, some shades of patriarchal authority can be seen in him. While talking to his wife he blurts out, "You think I'd wait for a mere wife! The call of the nation is far more important than the call of a wife" (501). This speech enlightens up upon the fact that the man who is a patriot and a democrat negates the importance of his wife. When his wife comes back from a hectic day and wishes to freshen herself before a family discussion, he forces her to postpone it. Also, he disregards and ignores the point of view of his wife, Seva regarding Jyoti's marriage. He asserts his socialist idea that Jyoti must marry a Dalit and says: Many of them actually married widows. Why did they do it...? That was also an experiment, a difficult experiment. But they dared to risk it. (524)

In this particular speech, a concerned father is not talking instead it is a staunch socialist who wishes to set an example before others at the

cost of his own daughter. The playwright emphasizes the fact as to how an individual's ideologies and dominating attitude sometimes prove ruinous for members of his family. Nath does not discourage Jyoti from marrying Arun after he hears about Arun's hideous future plans from his wife and son. While talking to Seva and Jayaprakash, Arun reveals his plans of brewing illicit liquor, also involving his wife and children. Such a plan of a future son-in-law can put any parent to shame but Nath is absolutely blinded by his selfish motive of boosting his image as a socialist. He cannot see through Arun's character; he in fact hardly sees Arun as an individual but views him more as a member of Dalit community. In his very first meeting with Arun, the talk is mainly one-sided because he is anticipating the successful propagation of his idea in society through the inter-caste marriage. He does not talk to Arun on practical terms like a father ought to do. He entrusts his daughter to Arun without any sense of parental responsibility, she is given away more as an object, an object which can be subdued by power. Rather, ignoring all the doubts expressed by his wife, Nath virtually pushes Jyoti to Marry Arun:

Jyoti's marriage, for Nath, becomes a kind of experiment to bridge the gap between various sections of our society. He does not for a moment think that he is making a guinea pig of his daughter in this difficult experiment. However, marriage here becomes a means of fulfillment of vested interests of families concerned. Nath also feels that upper caste girls like Jyoti can polish off the rough edges in the personalities of Dalit youths like Arun. He burdens Jyoti with the responsibility of bringing out the true potential in Arun. Maya Pandit writes that Nath, "puts the entire onus of bringing about the transformation in society on Jyoti" (71). As Nath, through her daughter's marriage wishes to set his image of a great social reformer and Arun, on the other hand wants to take revenge from the higher castes' people by marrying Jyoti. Jyoti is made to bear the burden of her caste and to atone for its excesses perpetrated on the Dalits by marrying a Dalit. After Jyoti's marriage, when she decides not to go back to Arun because of his ruthless and cruel behaviour towards her, it is again Nath who imposes his decision on her to go back to Arun. In spite of the fact that he is aware of the true side of Arun, his hypocrisy, artifice and double standards, Nath ignores it for the sake of his "experiment". He still thinks of this marriage as a significant social experiment. So he desperately wants this marriage to work. Nath says:

This is not just a question of daughter's life, Seva, this has.... a far wider significance....this experiment is a

very precious experiment. (537)

For Nath, the “experiment” is more “precious” than his daughter. This step of his proves ruinous for Jyoti. Her *Kanyadaan* is complete at this moment. Jyoti is not a human being for her father but just a ‘means’ for carrying but an “experiment”.

Seva, Jyoti’s mother is a complete contrast to Nath. She is more sensible, pragmatic, understanding and perceptive as compared to her husband. The playwright asserts that though Seva is more prudent and sensible as far as the marriage of Jyoti is concerned, however, her husband’s power by virtue of her male gender doesn’t allow her prudence to prevail.

Due to the lack of parental guidance, solely of her father, Jyoti decides to marry Arun against all odds and despite the fact that he is different in every way from her. After her marriage, she is forced to live in a state of utter humiliation and abjection. She tries to implement her father’s idealism in her married life by ignoring Arun’s negative qualities and trying to search for the essential goodness in him, but it proves more tortures for her. For Arun, getting drunk and beating his wife unnecessarily is “first and foremost a demonstration of power, of a will to assert authority and dominate, an attempt to establish male dominance by means of physical force” (Sichtermann 39). Power is presented here in the form of physical manipulation as Jyoti is severely assaulted by Arun. Moreover, it is the only strategy, which he can adopt to take revenge against members of the higher caste. By beating and tormenting his wife, he gratifies his male ego. In this battle of power, the battle of caste, it is not the either caste which wins, but the male ego and power that wreck the life of Jyoti.

It is not only Arun who is responsible for Jyoti’s suffering, her father is also to be blamed for ruining his daughter’s life. Because of lack of her father’s guidance and the overwhelming idealism instilled into her right from childhood, she becomes vulnerable to abuse and exploitation in marriage. Like Alison she tolerates passively the atrocities and violent behaviour of her husband as a wife is not supposed to protest against her husband after marriage. But when her capacity to endure reaches a breaking point, she decides not to yield to the oppressive marriage. The playwright asserts that marriage also becomes an institution of power where a woman gets marginalized because of her gender. At this moment, her father plays the devil in her life. He orders her to go back with her exploiter, Arun for the sake of his own idealistic values. The situation of Jyoti differs from

Alison particularly at this moment. Alison goes to her parent’s home and comes back to Jimmy of her own volition. She is regretful of her action of leaving Jimmy. Like a typical subservient female in the patriarchal order, Alison asks forgiveness of her husband falling at his feet in the style of commercial films. She reconciles herself to the prevalent dominating circumstances. But when Jyoti decides not to go back to Arun, it is her father who is responsible for forcing her to adjust to the humiliating marriage. She becomes a mere tool to make her father’s socialist experiment a success. To get married to Arun was her choice but to go back to him after undergoing harrowing experiences and severe torture is a decision imposed upon her by Nath. Father here becomes a patriarchal agent who seeks to maintain his idealistic-cum-power based role.

As compared to *Look Back in Anger*, which has an ending conforming to the patriarchal discourse, *Kanyadaan* has a just ending. *Look Back in Anger* ends upholding the male voice and ego and the submission and silent acquiescence of the suffering woman but in *Kanyadaan*, there is an anticipation of Jyoti’s growth as an individual. She asserts her individual identity and individual will at the end by giving a jolt to the idealism of her father and the opinions formed on the basis of power equations. She thus becomes a new woman in the feminine sense.

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5

A Diatribe on Communalism: Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* and Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas*

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The partition is probably the most cataclysmic event in the history of twentieth-century India. I (Hasan, 97, emphasis added)

The partition of the country was not mere a political event for them; instead a great human tragedy to which they articulated an imaginative response and wrote some brilliant and classic work of fiction.

The two classic works of renowned novelists that I shall be focussing on in my paper are Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* and Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas*. The novels of partition, *Tamas* and *Train to Pakistan*, need to be examined in the context of ideas, art, and their strength and weaknesses. The two novelists have the common theme, but they depict the experience of trauma with different strategies, patterns and modes of expressions.

Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* is a historical novel published in 1959 and it vociferously recounts the Partition of India. This illustrious novelist digs into a deep local focus, providing a human dimension which brings to the event a sense of reality, horror and believability. As he himself belongs to the community who remained the victim of this cruel fate, he could easily understand the pain of the people who fell prey to this plot. Not only he participated as a villager in the events of Mano Majra, an imaginative peaceful abode of communal harmony but he narrated the whole tragedy as a detached observer also.

The novel is set in the small village of Mano Majra on the bank of Sutlej river where the only event of importance is a train crossing the railway bridge. The partition is represented as an event which the simple village who have lived peaceably together regardless of religious differences cannot fathom. Problems arise when interlopers seek to stir up the villagers to attack Muslim travelling on the train to Pakistan. As the novel unfolds, we are told that almost ten million people were trying to get a passage for their destinations. But one million people died in the flight. The ghost train is a metaphor for death. It communicates horror

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and fear: No one sat on the roof. No one clung between the bogies..... but somehow it was different. Their was something uneasy about it. It had a ghostly quality. (82)

Previously, at Mano Majra, Sikhs and Muslims were friendly to one another; they lived together for centuries. The small village was free from communal disharmony. On one night in the month of August, Ram Lal, a money lender was killed by a dacoit. Juggat Singh, a badmash, lives in the same village. He loves a Muslim girl Nooran. Policemen arrive at the village to look into the case of murder of Ram Lal. Iqbal Singh, a westernized young man also arrives by the same train. He is arrested in the case of the murder of Ramlal. The development in the novel presents the catastrophic events. The ghost train with corpses, from Pakistan, arrives at Mano Majra. Sikhs and Muslims on the platform feel frightened; the sight benumbs them. They fall a prey to suspicion, distrust and hostility. Muslims go to Chandan Nagar, and they are transported to Pakistan. Upon learning that the government was planning to transport Muslims from Mano Majra to Pakistan the next day for their safety, one Muslim said, "What have we to do with Pakistan? We were born here. So were our ancestors. We have lived amongst [Sikhs] as brothers" (133). After the Muslims leave to a refugee camp from where they will eventually go to Pakistan, a group of religious agitators comes to Mano Majra and instills in the local Sikhs a hatred for Muslims and convinces a local gang to attempt mass murder as the Muslims leave on their train to Pakistan. On his release from jail, Juggat Singh goes to the railway station; he looks into every bogie to find Nooran. On rail track, he tries to neutralize the explosive plotted by Hindu fanatic. But the train kills him and goes to Pakistan.

Khushwant Singh's *Train To Pakistan* often is termed as 'classics' of world literature in grasping the bitter truth of his times. He detested communalism as well as the desolation of women during the time of partition and proved him to be a master in highlighting the estrangement between Hindus and Muslims. The individuality in Khushwant Singh's writings is on account of his anger and disenchantment with the "...long cherished human values in the wake of inhuman bestial horrors and insane savage killings on both sides during the Partition of the subcontinent between India and Pakistan in August 1947" (Harish 126). The novelist brings to the centre stage the subsequent violence on both sides of the border manifested in ruthless mass destruction as well as the evil impact of Partition on the peace-loving Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs of Mano Majra.

Bhisham Sahni's *Tamas* is the reflective response to the partition

of India —one of the most tragic events in the recent history of the Indian subcontinent. Bhisham Sahni witnessed the turbulence of the period as an adult. That was a period of intense turmoil — people sacrificing their lives for the freedom of the country, people dying fighting. The unprecedented communal violence provoked by the callous manipulation of religious sentiments of different communities by the elements who chose to use religion as a weapon to achieve political objectives heightened his sensitivity towards human suffering and also strengthened his commitment to secularism.

The events described in *Tamas* are based on true accounts of the riots of 1947 that Sahni was a witness to in Rawalpindi, and in this novel the author himself resurrects chilling memories of the consequences of communalism. *Tamas* tells the story of a sweeper named Nathu who is bribed and deceived by a local Muslim politician to kill a pig, ostensibly for a veterinarian. The following morning, the carcass is discovered on the steps of the mosque and the town, already tension-ridden, erupts. Enraged Muslims massacre scores of Hindus and Sikhs, who, in turn, kill every Muslim they can find. Finally, the area's British administrators call out the army to prevent further violence. The killings stop but nothing can erase the awful memories from the minds of the survivors, nor will the various communities ever trust one another again. The novel seeks to expose fundamentalism because this is the biggest plague from which our society is suffering and which makes us most vulnerable.

The novel is a grim reminder of the immense tragedy that results whenever the religious sentiments of communities are manipulated to achieve political objectives. It is a pragmatic warning against the use of religion as a weapon to gain and perpetuate political power. *Tamas* strongly brings out the picture of 'other side' scene while India moved towards freedom and division minute by minute. Communal Relations despite having lived together for centuries get snapped within minutes. It is easy to find how unsafe they felt in other's presence: Muslims have infiltrated every mohalla. After the riots in 1926, two or three such mohallas did come up which had exclusive Hindu and Sikh population such as the Naya Mohalla, Rajpura,.... (77)

The social relations suddenly deteriorate between the two communities and the environment gets highly charged. Then it is quite natural to find contestation among involved parties and confront: "*Vande Mataram! Say, hail to Bharat Mata – Hail to Gandhi-Jivs. Pakistan – Long live! Pakistan – Long Live!*"

Qaiyade Azam – Long Live"(33). In such circumstances, people like Mural Ali, who are again pawns of bigger forces, using the poor and needy like Nathu Chamar implement engineered communal conflicts to yield political mileage. It becomes very difficult for the neutrals to control such situations and the 'darkness' (*Tamas*) of communal hatred takes its toll. Tension slowly mounted on into the town and town's men seem to be too sensitive and alertly observing the change in life-rhythm. Change again is not something with which they are non-acquainted. Every one appeared scared: Where Hindus and Muslims happened to live together, only one sentence was heard, uttered again and again, 'It's too bad! It's too bad!' (125-126).

The most disturbing episode of the novel is Jasbir's suicide, the daughter of Harnam Singh and Banto along with fellow Sikh women and children who drown themselves in a well in order to save their honour from being abused and mutilated (293). These women fearlessly jump into the well for they had no choice. They chanted the Gurbani while heading towards the well but their recitation is not like raising slogans in the name of God, for them the recitation infused strength to meet their death daringly. It is ultimately this very incident which brought an end to the riots in that area.

The partition of Indian sub-continent was the single most traumatic event experienced in recent years. The violence that it unleashed was unprecedented, unexpected and barbaric provoked by the hooligan actions of a few, the vengeance that ordinary Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs wrecked on each other coarsened political judgment and deranged our understanding of what is meant by moral rightness.

To conclude it can be said that the novels on the partition present a realistic show of the tribulations the people underwent on account of the violence. Since both the novelists were victims of the communal violence carried out by frantic communalists, they are convinced that communal disharmony was responsible for human slaughter from all sides and any particular side could not be made responsible for ugly and repugnant series of events. The horrifying experiences faced by the novelists haunted them for a long time and the only outlet they could have was through their writings.

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6

The Sinister in Shakespeare visa- vis his Contemporaries and the Greek & Roman Tragedians

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Tragedy deals with the serious aspects of life as comedy deals with the cheerful and lighter mood. It is essentially a tale of suffering ending in death (Tragic end) of the main characters of the play according to Aristotle. Tragedy is the representation of an action, which is serious complete in itself, and of a certain length. It is expressed in speech made beautiful in different ways in different parts of the play; it is acted not narrated; and by exciting pity and fear gives a healthy relief to such emotions". Shakespearean Tragedy conforms with this definition of Aristotle but it violates the principle of Greek philosopher in one important respect; its action is not all serious; its seriousness is often relieved by the comic. In this respect Shakespeare was but holding a 'mirror to life' in which joy and serous, tears and smiles, frequently alternate. He was thus a greater artist than the other dramatists who blindly followed Aristotle.

The theme of a Shakespearean Tragedy is the struggle between good and evil resulting in serious convulsions and disturbances, sorrows, sufferings and death, Its subject is the struggle of good and Evil which permeate in the world simultaneously in all ages and times. It depicts men and women struggling with evil and finally succumbing to it with resultant deaths of innocent characters and harmless creatures. Through their heroic struggle we relies the immense spiritual potentiality of man, Shakespearean tragedy never lives behind. Addressing effect, it soothes consoles and strengthens. In his tragedies he presents a rich series of excitements, which rouses pity and sympathy in the audience. The themes of all the four great Tragedies are sensational, For example Macbeth has its witches, its ghosts and apparitions, its murder in a darkened castle its drunken partner, and its thrilling sight of lady Macbeth walking in her sleep. In Hamlet we have the ghost and the grave diggers, and in Othello night alarms and sword fights. Every one of his tragedies is an expression of some human passion of failing and its disastrous consequences.

The origins of tragedy in the west are obscure, but the art from

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certainly developed out of the poetic and religious traditions of ancient Greece. Its roots may be traced more specifically to the dithyrambs, the chants and dances honoring the god Dionysus, later known to the Romans as Bacchus. These drunken ecstatic performances were said to have been created by the satyrs, half goat beings who surrounded Dionysus in his revelry.

Tragedy depicts the downfall of a noble hero or heroine, usually through some combination of hubris, fate, and the will of the gods. The tragic hero's powerful wish to achieve some goal inevitably encounters limits, usually those of human frailty (flaws in reason, hubris, society), the gods (through oracles prophets, fate), or nature. Aristotle says that the tragic hero should have a flaw and/or make some mistake hamartia. The hero need not die at the end, but he or she must undergo a change in fortune. In addition, the tragic hero may achieve some revelation or recognition (anagnorisis "knowing again" or "knowing back" about human fate, destiny, and the will of the gods. Aristotle terms this sort of recognition "a change from ignorance to awareness of a bond of love or hate".

Greek literature boasts three great writers of tragedy whose works are extant: Sophocles, Euripides and Aeschylus. The largest festival for Greek tragedy was the Dionysia held for five days in March, for which competition prominent playwrights usually submitted three tragedies one satyr play each. The Roman theater does not appear to have followed the same practice Seneca adapted Greek stories, such as Phaedra, into Latin plays; however, Senecan tragedy has long been regarded as closet drama, meant to be read rather than played.

A favorite theatrical device of many ancient Greek tragedians was the ekkyklema, a cart hidden behind the scenery which could be rolled out to display the aftermath of some event which had happened out of sight of the audience. This event was frequently a brutal murder of some sort, an act of violence which could not be effectively portrayed visually, but an action of which the other characters must see the effects in order for it to have meaning and emotional resonance. Another reason that the violence happened off stage was that the theatre was considered a holy place, so to kill someone on stage is to kill them in the arranged chronically and the word is made to suit the action and is simply meant for a real representation of nature (man). The evil is thus made manifest on a place closer to human perception rather than in the mirage of imaginative fantasy. In Aeschylus Oresteia, When the king's butchered body (After the murder of Agamemnon) is wheeled out in a grand display for all to see. Variation

on the ekkyklema are used in tragedies and other forms to this day, as writers still find it a useful and often powerful device for showing the consequences of extreme human actions. Another such device was a crane, the machine, which served to hoist a god or goddesses on stage where they were supposed to arrive flying. This device gave origin to the phrase "does ex machina" ("god out of a machine"), that is the surprise intervention of an unforeseen external factor that changes the outcome of an event Greek tragedies also sometime included a chorus composed of singers to advance and fill in detail of the plot.

Nietzsche in his famous book, 'The Birth of Tragedy' traced the evolution of tragedy from early rituals, through the joining of Apollonian and Dionysian forces, until its early "death" in the hands of Socrates. In opposition to Schopenhauer, Nietzsche viewed tragedy as the art form of sensual acceptance of the terrors of reality and rejoicing in these terrors in love of fate (amor fati) and therefore as the antithesis to the Socratic Method, or the belief in the power of reason to unveil any and all of the mysteries of existence. Ironically, Socrates was found quoting from tragedies.

G.W.F. Hegel, in his seminal "The Phenomenology of Spirit" argues for a more complicated theory of tragedy, with two complementary branches which, though driven by a single dialectical principle, differentiate Greek tragedy from that which follows Shakespeare. His later lectures formulate such a theory of tragedy as a conflict of ethical forces, represented by character, in ancient Greek tragedy, but in Shakespearean tragedy the conflict is rendered as one of subject and object of individual personality which must manifest self destructive passions because only such passions are strong enough to defend the individual from a hostile and capricious external world.

Thus in ancient Greek tragedy, the evil is more embedded as character types, whereas in Shakespearean tragedy the evil is largely permeated by the weaknesses inherent in man. A character is largely the epitome of a fixed virtue or vice in Greek tragedy & circumstances are a mere agent of the ultimate destruction. In Shakespeare the evil is more dynamic & flexible, and the same character may act both evil & virtue placed in situations different. Thus the high spirited noble Hamlet can kill Polonius in a frenzy of madness, and as well spare Claudius at his prayers.

Hegel's comments on a particular play may better elucidate his theory: "Viewed externally, Hamlet's death may be seen to have been brought about accidentally but in Hamlet's soul, we understand that death

has lurked from the beginning: the sandbank of finitude cannot suffice his sorrow and tenderness, such grief and nausea at all conditions of life. We feel he is a man whom inner disgust has almost consumed well before death comes upon him from outside.” (Hegel, ed. Glockner, XIV, p 572). Nietzsche in *Twilight of the Idols, what I Owe to the Ancients*, 5: had this to say: “The psychology of the orgiastic as an overflowing feeling of life and strength, where even pain still has the effect of a stimulus, gave me the key to the concept of tragic feeling, which had been mis-understood both by Aristotle and even more by modern pessimists. Tragedy is so far from being a proof of the pessimism (in Schopenhauer’s sense) of the Greeks that it may on the contrary, be considered a decisive rebuttal and counterexample. Saying yes to life even in its strangest and most painful episodes, the will to life rejoicing in its own inexhaustible vitality even as it witnesses the destruction of its greatest heroes- that is what I called Dionysian, that is what I guessed to be the bridge to the psychology of the tragic poet. Not in order to be liberated from terror and pity, not in order to purge oneself of a dangerous affect by its vehement discharge – which is how Aristotle understood tragedy – but in order to celebrate oneself the eternal joy of becoming, beyond all terror and pity-that tragic joy included even joy in destruction”.

The classical Greek and Roman tragedy was largely forgotten in Western Europe from the Middle Ages to the beginning of the 16th century, and public theater in this period was dominated by mystery play, morality plays, forces and miracle plays, etc. As early as 1503 however, original language versions of Sophocles, Seneca, Euripides, Aristophanes, Terence and Plautus were all available in Europe and the next forty years would see humanists and poets both translating these classics and adapting them. In the 1540s the continental university settling (and especially-from 1553 on – the Jesuit colleges became host to a Neo-Latin theater (in Latin) written by professions. The influence of Seneca was particularly strong in humanist tragedy. His plays with their ghosts, lyrical passages and rhetorical oratory brought to many humanist tragedies a concentration on rhetoric and language over dramatic action.

Humanist writers recommended that tragedy should be in five acts and have three main characters of noble rank the play should begin in the middle of the action (in *medias res*), use noble language and not show scenes of horror on the stage some writers attempted to link the medieval tradition of morality plays and farces to classical theater, but others rejected this claim and elevated classical tragedy and comedy to higher dignity. Of

greater difficulty for the theorists was the incorporation of Aristotle’s notion of “catharsis” or the purgation of emotions with Renaissance theater, which remained profoundly attached to both pleasing the audience and to the rhetorical aim of showing moral examples (*exemplum*). The precepts of the “three unities” and theatrical decorum would eventually come to dominate French tragedy in 17th century, while English Renaissance tragedy followed a path for less behooving to classical theory and more open to dramatic action and the portrayal of tragic events on stage.

In the *De finibus* (1.2.4) Cicero claims that Roman dramatists copied their Greek original word for word Cicero was looking for a Roman *exemplum* to follow in order to justify his translation of Greek philosophy into Latin. He appeals, therefore; to the precedence of tragedians at Rome, who have already “copied” Greek literature in the form of plays. Roman tragedy needs to be understood in its cultural context from a performance-criticism perspective: Roman tragedians adapted rather than translated their Greek originals, unless they were comparing original Roman plays. A Latin play for a Roman audience required the inclusion of Roman culture onstage to make a connection with the audience. From Livius’ first plays, which influenced Naevius and Ennius. Roman dramatists altered Greek originals for a Roman audience-indeed, there could have been no success in either tragedy or comedy, if there were no connection with the audience.

The Roman context of performance, which differed significantly from Greek practice, gave greater access to the stage, to more people on more occasions for a variety of purposes, in particular political exposure. In Athens, an annual lottery determined who would be *chor-gos* to provide the financial backing for the plays presented at the great Dionysia. Plays were selected by the audience or ‘*praetor urbonus*’, and it was his prerogative to choose which plays made it onto the stage. Individual Romans could also stage scenic entertainment at occasions such as triumphs and votive and funeral games. Without the original performance dates for most plays from the early to mid-Republic, it is difficult to construct an ideal or a private individual’s motivation in selecting a specific play or dramatic theme, but ample evidence survives from the late Republic and early Empire to illustrate the importance of his and the actor’s role in incorporating offstage allusions into the theatre and into the plays themselves in order to shape the reception of either the plays as a whole or particular passages from them.

The theatricality of the late Republic and early Empire is only understandable as a development of the earlier tragic tradition, which made theatrical allusion sensible outside the theatre (versus the staged reality of practice, which made outside reality sensible inside the theatre). When earlier “texts” and performances were combined with contemporary productions under the late Republic, the result was the reciprocal mixing of theater and reality. At variance with literary allusion, which depends upon a verbal or thematic echo of an earlier “text”, theatrical allusion depends both upon a relationship with earlier tests and plays with similar subjects and upon allusions arising out of previous or contemporary performances that are recognized as having significance to current production/restaging or to events offstage. How else, could the earlier plays of Shakespeare, remain popular and relevant to later audiences and culture in general? Restaged plays with performance traditions were “use” for specific occasions to produce a correspondence between real people and mythological characters, between current events and mythological events, and between the current stage production (dramatic test) and a previous stage production (dramatic test). The numerous productions (new and restaged) of the Thyestes for his triple triumph in 29 B.C.E., and the cultural content(s) of Accius Brutus, especially the plays later role as an inspiration to Ceaser’s assassins, point to the important role previous production played in interpretations of contemporary staging’s.

In the English language, the most famous and most successful tragedies are those of William Shakespeare and his Elizabethan contemporaries like C. Marlowe & John Webster. Christopher Marlowe was the most significant of Shakespeare’s contemporaries. He possessed a supreme quality which enabled him at one to lift drama into the sphere of high literature. His exclusiveness produced intensity, and the English stage was in great need of intensity. Grace, wit, and fancy had been scattered on it, mingled indeed with faults of every kind, but never hitherto had it known this dash, this vehemence animating a whole play, this rapid march, as to victory, by which drama inspires the conviction that thus to move is to be alive. Marlowe’s plays, with a new national pride. His characters, out of scale and unnatural as they are, can dispense with probability because they have the breath of life. The subjects Marlowe borrowed, the heroes he moulded, were no more than his mouthpieces, voicing his exorbitant dreams, Like him they sought the infinite and like him were never sated. In ‘The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus (1588), his forceful egoism is projected into the character of the necromancer

(Dr. Faustus) who vows himself to the devil in return for sovereign knowledge and sovereign power, and who is thus able for twenty-four years to satisfy his appetites. Faustus has to keep his bargain with Lucifer, and tremblingly awaits death and hell. Marlowe, the atheist, alone in a Christian world at times felt to the full the horror of his denials and his blasphemies. The last scenes of Faustus are among the most pathetic and most grandiose in Renaissance drama. They are unsurpassable even by Shakespeare. Even Goethe took the same legend for the basis of one of the chief accomplishments of modern poetry, he could not eclipse the poignant greatness of his fore runner’s scenes.

He, who did not know how the impious tremble, could not recapture that anguish of horror.

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7

Contemporary Indian women Novelists' Feministic Perspective: An overview

*Dr. Manpreet Kaur**

History has been 'his story': a record of male experiences written by man, for man and from a male perspective. Coppelia Kahn while focusing on the feministic perspective feels that "what has been designated historically significant has been deemed so according to a valuation of power and activity in a public world." He further admits that "as long as war and politics seem more significant to the history than child-rearing, women remain marginalized or invisible. It is therefore imperative for historians of women to reconstruct the female experience."

Indian women writers have released their creative feminine sensibility in different genres. My paper is an overview of the women novelists in India, and their different yet one perspective of life and liking. Kamala Markanday, Kamala Das, Anita Rau Badami, Jhumpa Lahiri, Nayantara Sehgal, Anita Desai, Namita Gokhale, Manju Kapoor, Mahashweta Devi, Arundhati Roy, Shashi Deshpande, Shoba de are not only a homogenous group of women writers rather they are governed by the dynamics of difference. They represent multifarious positions ranging from the conservative to the moderate and radical. Each one of them has her own views and her own creative characteristics. In reality however, they share deeply rooted commonalities: sometimes ambiguously inside and sometimes threateningly outside the dominant society. The efforts and trends of writing are directed at reinventing and reconstructing woman and breaking the long silence of male-oriented society and further evolving and negotiating her place in the psyche of society. Some of the contemporary woman writers present their creative view point thus as analyzed in the subsequent paragraphs.

Anita Rau Badami is one of the newest writers in the vibrant field of Indian sub-continental literature. Born in Rourkela, Badami has lived in Canada since 1991. In her writings she writes with sensitivity and subtlety about the vicious cycle of oppression that families impose upon each other, though not always consciously. Misunderstandings between two generations result because of modernizing culture and priorities. Memories collide with a changing culture and cause confusion in social institutions.

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Male chauvinism, the conflict between the modern and the traditional values has sprouted into a new conflict: one as a traditional wife and mother and the other as an epitome of everything western.

For Jhumpa Lahiri an intellectual commitment and a political movement that seeks justice for women and end sexism in all forms results in feminism. The very basis of feminism should be a mode of existence in which the woman is free of the dependence syndrome. Jhumpa Lahiri's perspective is a quest for justice on social, cultural and political phenomena. Nayantra Sehgal, the daughter of Vijay Laxmi Pandit and niece of Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, has brought to fiction new trend, a novel outlook that understanding a rich heritage strongly influenced by the west. The writer's perspective is a new marital and sexual morality. Her writings show her deep concern with the need for woman's liberation, breaking patriarchal limitations. She propagates decent human relations, mutual regard and trust, honesty and freedom can anchor man-woman relationship. No cruelty can be greater than loveless togetherness. She is not being against man. The call is for recognition of woman as an equally meaningful partner. Nayantata, in her novels impressively marshals the historical argument for feminism. She vividly portrays the suffering and agony of woman, the power division in marriage, privileging one sex all the space and marginalization the others. Nayantra envisions a world, which should be based on equality, sharing and harmony between the two sexes, where the needs, the functions, the virtues of woman, are valued along with those of man. Sehgal's woman looks for happiness and self-fulfillment in a world shared by both the sexes.

In Anita Desai's novels female protagonists usually are driven to despair. They breathe in a conventional and confined atmosphere. They put up a struggle, though it is a silent one. They refuse to be subdued. They are never able to openly show resentment, much less revolt, yet they are acutely conscious of suppression and oppression and are unwilling to take it in their stride. The woman who is idealized and made a divinity and who rebuilds and recreates is in practice mal-treated, abused and exploited by our society. Most of Desai's women do not surrender to the will of men, but if they do, it is right at the end, after putting up their magnum resistance.

Namita Gokhale writes about woman's protest and assertion as an individual and not just as the 'other' in relation to man. Femininity in her perspective is not a conclusive version of man, a woman needs to be defined as a woman and that is what the contemporary woman yearns

for, looks for and lives for.

Manju Kapoor represents the 'new woman'; educated, working and quite securely married but still aspiring for independence on larger context. While voicing dissent Manju also shows that true strength lies in the social and cultural constructs which are constantly in a state of flux. Her writings manifest a desire to resurrect the past and voice the struggle and pain of woman today. Her perspective is a voyage of self-discovery; a trip into the inner self in the process of understanding the forces and influences that shaped and made her who she is.

Rama Mehta, a lesser known novelist presents a new tone and tenor of feminine sensibility. She explores a woman's inner self and her ambivalent perspective towards a sense of affirmation. Some of the key questions that she raises are: how can a woman define herself by her family, by motherhood, by being the matriarchal, or in a patriarchal context, the submissive 'other' in a chauvinistic and dominating male world? Does the glorification of women's role in the domestic sphere affect her own definition of personhood? Does she directly or individually react or protest against the patriarchal training and culture that strives to mould her into societally determined role. Given the fact that women have been structured into the patriarchal institutions, does the protagonist strive towards changing her condition and those of others around her? Do her individual efforts lead to any collective advancement in feminist consciousness? Is it possible to strive a powerful impact of patriarchal indoctrination or does a woman finds herself succumbing to it?

Shashi Deshpande's perspective highlights the craving of a woman to be heard, an urge for the assertion of her identity amidst the intricate relationships in a patriarchal order which stifles any genuine articulation on the part of a woman. The search for recognition is spread all over in the writings of Shashi Deshpande. But in her perspective of quest of the "self" she does not decline her sense of responsibility. Her woman eventually reconciles herself with her individual identity of being a wife, a mother, a daughter and a sister. Thus she is a non-person, an appendage, a slave to the master man. She is not an individual in her own right but a medium through whom man aspires for self-affirmation and self-realization. The culture that created a Sita and a Savitri has denied the rights of existence to woman. She is yet to achieve individuation and an authentic self-identity. Shashi Deshpande attempts to pass her woman through a transformation which signifies for her a change from bondage to freedom, from indecision to self-assertion and from weakness to strength.

Kamala Das's perspective, though much is in her poetry writing, is a female's yearning for spiritual liberation. Female sensibilities and sufferings with a sigh of disgust and anguish in an unusual tone of boldness and frankness arises in her works. She deals with women's awareness and empowerment with a sincere explanation of man-woman relationship in an orthodox Indian society. Her approach encourages and advises Indian woman for leading a successful life by doing away with egoism, conceit, vanity, arrogance, obstinacy and selfishness. The larger vision of life should impel woman to comprehend the larger issues of life lying beyond the "cocooned self". Shoba de is capable of exploring and analyzing the sociological context with courage and conviction. Here's is an intimate understanding of this psyche and self of woman.

Mahashweta Devi voices woman's struggle and survival against the oppressive economic systems. She is committed to the under privileged woman, the tribal women, low caste women and the other socially and backward category on the one hand and the urban suave careerist woman on the other hand. She speaks for women but does not subscribe to the idea that it is man alone who is responsible for the marginalized status of women. Other forces of society including the women themselves contribute as much and sometimes more as a man. She takes a comprehensive view of societal forces which construct a woman.

Thus, we see that one common perspective and trend that all the contemporary literature written or in the process of writing in India is that men and women have been and are and shall be equally important. Wheels of society Sooner we realize better for the civilization. Right from the Vedas and Poetics women have been craving to come out of the shackles to one or the other bondage. The journey is never ending. The desire for recognition and regard for what they are and their share of contribution for the growth of civilization in its multi-shades has taken not only India but the globe by storm, sometimes in the form of vehement reaction against those forces which deny them respect and identify and objectify them sexually. Women's writing is consistently evolving and redefining itself through never perspective and thus their very outlook in the contemporary world is ever evolving and reemerging.

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8

Challenges in English Language Teaching in Haryana – A Teachers' Perspective

*Geeta Goyal**

Haryana has made a tremendous progress in the field of education. However it has been found that teaching and learning of English in educational institutions is largely inadequate in the state. Majority of the students don't acquire basic language proficiency even after taking courses at school and college level for many years. They feel handicapped in using English effectively in and outside classrooms. Generally learning means "the ability to use the language with competence and facility so as to meet as effectively as possible the demands made by life situations now and later" (Gautam 104). For successful teaching activities, it is required that certain essential pre-requisites on the part of teacher as well as student are adequately met. The role of a teacher is of paramount importance in implementing ELT programs effectively. He plans his lesson, guides the students and gives them the opportunity to use the language in controlled situations. The present paper aims to address the current issues in teaching English in Haryana from the teachers' perspective.

For this purpose, a random survey was carried out in sixteen senior secondary schools and thirteen under-graduate colleges across the state. Through a questionnaire, views and opinions of one hundred English teachers (50 from schools and 50 from colleges) were sought. Questions regarding teaching procedures and students' attitude to learning English were asked. Some questions were designed to know whether the present examination system at senior secondary and graduation level supports the goal of teaching English in current scenario. The problems faced by teachers in classrooms, relevance of attendance, assignments, seminars etc. use of latest language learning techniques in classes were also covered in the questionnaire. The collected data was analyzed to find out the problems being faced by ELT teachers in the state. Further, the opinions of teachers with different teaching experience were compared to get a comprehensive view of the current situation of ELT in Haryana.

The analysis of the survey revealed that only a small number of teachers (16% college and 26% school) felt that present courses completely equipped the students for future needs and job requirements.

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It was found that majority (70% college and 70 % school teachers) of them thought that syllabus in English was only partially relevant from students' perspective. Teachers with different teaching experience also responded in the similar manner. 65% school and 68% college teachers with an experience of 1-10 years, 75% school and college teachers with an experience of 11-20 years, and 63% school and 65% college teachers with more than 20 yrs experience considered the present syllabus only partially beneficial from the students' point of view (Table I).

Table I: Present courses in English equipping the students for future needs:

		School Teachers (%)			College Teachers (%)		
		School Teachers (0 to 10 yrs Exp)	School Teachers (11 to 20 yrs exp)	School Teachers Above 21 y	College Teachers (0 to 10 Yrs Exp)	College Teachers (11 to 20 yrs exp)	College Teachers Above 21
21	Yes	26	16	21	14	25	25
63	Partially Yes	70	70	65	68	75	75
14	No	4	14	14	18		

Further, it was observed that though teachers at school and college level felt that reading and writing is covered in the existing syllabi to some extent, they opined differently regarding spoken aspect. It was found that as compared to 80% college teachers, only 56% school teachers considered spoken as the most neglected aspect in present syllabi. Further, 65 % school teachers as compared to 82 % college teachers with 1-10 yrs. experience, 44 % school teachers as compared to 63 % college teachers with 11-20 yrs. experience held the opinion that students lag behind in spoken skills as this is not adequately covered in the courses. However, conclusive results were found regarding examination and internal assessment. 94% college and 98% school teachers felt that the present examination system judged largely the written competence of the students. Only 6% college and 2 % school teachers felt that examinations needed no reform. Majority of school (88%) and college (80%) teachers felt the need of introducing internal assessment. Almost all the teachers (70% college and 72% school) recommended reforms in syllabus. Situation was found to be almost similar so far as teaching of English at school and

college level in Haryana is concerned. It was observed that most of the teachers faced some common practical problems due to which they couldn't carry out what they considered quite important for teaching English. Both school (88%) and college (92%) teachers considered large size a constraint in teaching of English. Similarly majority of school (82%) and college (88%) teachers felt that variation in students' language ability was a hindrance in implementing ELT programs in classroom. Likewise 42% school and 50% college teachers considered weak foundation of students as a major factor in slow learning process. 44% school and 46% college teachers held the opinion that students felt helpless in learning English a proper way due to rural background and family atmosphere while only 14% school and 4% college teachers felt that students were rarely interested in English and being a compulsory subject, they had just to read it (Table II).

Table II: Reasons for students' inability to learn English:

School teachers (%)			
College teachers (%)			
A	Weak foundation	42	50
B	Background	44	46
C	Lack of interest	14	4

Bilingual method was found to be the most commonly adopted method by the college teachers as compared to Grammar/ Translation method which was found to be the most preferred choice of the school teachers. 43% school as compared to 18% college teachers (with 1-10 yrs. experience), 57% school as compared to 50% college teachers (11-20 yrs. experience), and 50% school as compared to 14% college teachers (above 20 yrs. experience) were found to be adopting the Grammar/ Translation method. On the other hand, 72% college teachers (with 1-10 yrs. experience), 50% (11-20 yrs. experience), 58% (above 20 yrs. experience) used bilingual method. Again, visual aids were found to be the most commonly used aids both by school (80%) and college (62%) teachers whereas audio aids were found to be the least used by both (school 00%) and (college 04%). Audio cum visual aids were found to be used more by college teachers (34%) than school (20%) Table III:

Table III: Type of aids used while teaching English:

School teachers %	College teachers (%)
A Audio aids	4

B	Visual aids	80	62
C	Audio cum visual aids	20	34

Regarding students' response in class, 62% school teachers opined that students participated in the discussion of lesson. Only 32% teachers considered their students as passive listeners. Whereas 44% college teachers rated their students as passive listeners and 42% found them actively participating. The need for teachers' training was felt strongly by both school (92%) and college (86%) teachers. Almost all the school teachers with different experience - 100% (0-10 yrs. experience), 93% (11-20 yrs.), endorsed this view. Similarly, 93% college teachers (0-10 yrs. experience), 100% (11-20 yrs. experience) felt the need of proper training to the teachers in using new methods and latest skills (Table IV).

Table IV: Need for specialized training in ELT :

	School Teachers (%)			College Teachers (%)		
	School Teachers (0 to 10 yrs.exp.)	School Teachers (11 to 20 yrs.exp.)	Teachers (11 to 20 yrs. exp.)	College Teachers (0 to 10 yrs. exp.)	College Teachers (11 to 20 yrs.exp.)	College Teachers (11 to 20 yrs. exp.)
Yes	92	86	100	93	93	100
No	8	14		7	7	

The above analysis reveals that both school and college teachers share many common problems so far as English Language Teaching in Haryana is concerned. The situation in colleges is not much different as compared to schools in Haryana. It has been found that though the teachers think that existing syllabus is quite helpful, yet it requires certain modifications in order to meet the demands of the students in present times. Oral work is covered in school syllabus to some extent, but it is almost ignored at college level. Almost all the teachers recommended reforms in syllabus, examination system, and felt the need for introducing internal assessment and oral work. The large size of classes and lack of proper training to the teachers are found to be the common constraints in implementing language learning techniques. Further, it is found that majority of the students cannot learn English properly due to various factors like their weak and poor base, lack of exposure, practice and family atmosphere. The difference of opinion between school and college teachers' response regarding students' involvement in class indicates that at college level students take assignments more casually. It may be because after admission in colleges, they feel more relaxed and free with almost

little stress for assignments and presentations whereas in schools, they have to remain involved because of pressure of assignments and worksheets. Thus, the process of being involved in class activities initiated at school level comparatively slows down in colleges.

Keeping in mind the above responses by teaching fraternity, it can be concluded that teaching English is in fact a challenging task in Haryana. It is quite difficult to make students with rural background learn a language that is not their mother tongue. No ready-made solutions can be provided to solve the problem. However, a dedicated and skilled teacher can do this by creating a stress free atmosphere in class. A teacher has to evolve his own strategy because only he knows his students' strength and weaknesses. At school level, special attention should be paid to make the students' foundation strong. As majority of the students in schools and colleges primarily depend on classroom teaching and prescribed syllabus for learning English, learners' needs should be kept in mind while designing syllabus. As has been stated "the key to effective teaching and learning lies in their planning (i.e. planning of curricula and teaching procedures) in relation to clearly conceived goals – goals conceived in term not of what the teacher does, but of what the students become" (Hill, 2). It is teacher's responsibility to create a stress free atmosphere in class so that the students are able to devote full energy to learning. He has to motivate students to participative learning. He can involve them in oral practice under his guidance. For this a teacher needs to understand his students, who are from different backgrounds and different personalities. With some changes in the present content materials, mode of evaluation and educational environment, the existing shape of ELT programs can be significantly improved.

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Travelogue – A Non Fictional Art of Literature

*B. R. Thakur**

Travelogue is a work of art like any form of literature. It is a genre of historical-realistic-fictional work. It is a light work but valid and interesting enough to read and enjoy it. It is no doubt, more than a tourist guide or report. Again a travelogue is more than a graphic record of the places and personal impressions of the traveler. Out of a traveler's experience, observation and recording of things, can arise a rich fragrance of the life and personality of the past, or of the distant land, or of the strange things. Travel literature displays local colours, climates and culture. It is because of these and many other reasons, travel-writings have got tremendous importance. It has assumed a metaphysical and semi-religious significance.

It is said that history in a travelogue not only gratifies the reader's curiosity about the past but also modifies his view of the present and his forecast of the future. Besides, a travelogue treats a multifarious range of things from art to science, cookery to scientific discovery. It is moreover literary in its narration. Its style is vivid and earnestly readable. Its mode of narration or the treatment of varied themes and connections in-between, show its relativity to the world of fiction. Travelogue exhibits varied aspects, search for identity, observation, aggressive mode of assessment, concern for the weak, sympathy for the sufferers and grand evaluation of men, manners, objects and developments.

Narratives of pilgrimages and crusades can be found dating back to the times when the foundation of England was being laid. Even in those early times the known world was being widened through discovery. Writer Hakluyt included in his 'Principal navigation' the legendary conquests of Arthur. The earliest of literature deals with accounts of travel undertaken by undaunted spirits like that of Beowulf. The beginnings of permanent marine literature can be traced in the voyages of Beowulf and of Adelard. The journey undertaken by Marco Polo aroused interest in the study of Geography in England towards the end of the thirteenth century. When early prose was written the travels recorded by the Madeville translators were very popular. The pioneers in exploration were not Britishers but people from Spain, Italy and Portugal. A serious recording of voyages

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also began in Spain and Italy. The early accounts of the voyages undertaken by these adventurous souls were written in a simple plain and direct style. Richard Hakluyt, who wrote in the early sixteenth century, was interested in navigation and voyages.

This was period when great works appeared in the field of drama and poetry. One finds a persistent call of the sea in these works. The spirit of discovery made a powerful impact on literature and real life. A writer of this period, Richard Eden has an important place in the literature of English navigation and discovery. He wanted to bring to the notice of his own countrymen the great achievements made by the Portuguese and Spaniards. He wanted to encourage his own countrymen to be adventurous. He published a book titled 'The Art of Navigation' to guide his countrymen. He also translated from Latin a treatise which is an account of New India and other new found lands and islands with description of large lands and islands found in West Ocean. Another writer Hakluyt also translated certain travel accounts from Latin into English.

Later on seamen wrote their own accounts of the voyages undertaken by them. John Hawkins wrote an account of his voyage 'A True Declaration of the Troublesome Voyage of Mr. John Hawkins to the parts of Guinea and the West Indies in the years of our Lord 1567 and 1568'. Another voyage account 'Discourse of a Discoverie for a New Passage to Catain' was written by Sir Humphrey Gilbert. These books on travelling are real accounts of the experiences of their authors.

By the beginning of the seventeenth century many such accounts had made their appearance. We find several references to sea voyages in the plays of Shakespeare. Shakespeare makes use of the literature on voyages which was available in the age and the character of seamen in his works speak with profound knowledge of the sea. In his book on seafaring Nathaniel Boteler deals with various aspects of seafaring – parts of a ship, choice of best ship and the signal sailing, chasing and fighting ships of wars etc. The literature of piracy also occupies place of its own.

In the eighteenth century extensive land travel was undertaken and documented. The travel accounts of this century are store houses of information and served an important function in those days. James Bruce and E.D. Clarke travelled Eastwards and have narrated in detail the strange events and experiences they came across. These narrators enriched the institutions of knowledge with the valuable information they gathered.

The nineteenth century travel books show an influence of the popular thought, the proper study of mankind is man, of that period. These books

do not deal so much with monuments, museums, churches and institutions as they do with men and women in relation to their surroundings. There are several accounts of travelers going to South America and writing about life in that part of the world. One of the finest examples of such writing is Darwin's account of the 'Beagle.' It is note worthy because of its place in the history of science and also a picturesque and readable record of travel.

Gradually these narratives ceased to be mere factual accounts of what was seen and heard and experienced in alien countries. The narrators started using and including imaginary episodes and dialogues in their writings. One such outstanding narration is by Kinglake who wrote about his journey from Belgrade to Constantinople, then to Smyrna, by sea to Cyprus and Bagrout from where he rode through Palestine and across the desert of Cairo to Damaskus and Anatolia. In his book titled 'Eothen' he includes imaginary conversation between people and certain reminiscences of childhood.

The books of travels to almost all parts of the world-East, West, North and South made a lasting impact on English poetry and prose, Almost all poets from Wordsworth to Tennyson and Browning have left some account or impression of their travels upon their pages. One comes across sketches of travels in the writings of eminent novelists from Fielding to Stevenson. Books on travel and books inspired by travel have enjoyed popularity which can find a parallel only in the case of novels.

Travel as motif has occurred repeatedly in the literature produced in England. The call of the sea has been a constant motif in British Literature even in the earliest work such as Beowulf-Chaucer has written about a shipman. After the Renaissance this motif grows strong in literature. As has already been discussed the sea adventurer was often a merchant who merged fable and genuine travel experience. These narratives were very popular and were widely read. Writers like Shakespeare used the information given in the sea chronicles of the time Without this information he would not have succeeded in writing the vivid description we find in his plays like 'The Tempest' and 'Pericles'. Shakespeare's characters often speak with profound knowledge of the sea.

The English mind was captivated by tales of travel. Daniel Defoe was an avid reader of travel accounts and his own writings are based on these. He made use of Hakluyt's 'Voyages', Dampier's 'New Voyage Round the World', Robert Knox's 'Historical Relation of Ceylon' and similar works. He narrates the adventures of his heroes and heroines as

in Captain Singleton, Moll Flanders and Colonel Jack. His ‘Robinson Crusoe’ appeals to people because of its imaginative value-the way the writer creates a new situation in an entirely new world – the desert island and the shipwrecked mariner, utterly alone. Defoe, in his works dreamt of gay highwaymen, of pirates and of little children who were pickpockets, of silent plague stricken streets of London, of ship wrecks and desert islands – all of which indicate his deep interest in literature of travel.

Novelists like Richardson and Fielding who chose to write novels. Travel is therefore a recurring motif in their works. The hero of Fielding’s ‘Tom Jones’ also finds himself on the high road.

It is not surprising that the travel motif recurs in the works of Fielding, for the last book written by him and published posthumously is ‘A Journal of a Voyage through Lisbon.’ The fact that Fielding undertook to write such an account indicates his interest in travel literature. About the existing travel literatures of his time Fielding opined that travelers seemed to have fallen either into the fault of filling their pages with ‘adventures which nobody could possibly have seen or experienced.’

Several other writers after Richardson and Fielding have used the motif of travel in their novels. But this motif was most effectively used by Jonathan Swift who was born in Dublin on November 30, 1667. His famous book ‘Gulliver’s Travels’ was published in 1726. Swift was writing in a period when several travelogues had already made their appearance. Daniel Defoe had combined fact and fiction in his novel ‘Robinson Crusoe’. Swift used his knowledge of travels to create fictitious places and countries.

Many American novels have travel as their motif, notable among them are novels like ‘Moby Dick’ and ‘Billy Budd’. The travel motif also later on became a symbol for a spiritual quest or an inward journey of the protagonist. Defoe and Swift used the information they got in various travel accounts to comment on the behavior of people in the society. In several novels written in this period and afterwards we find travel figuring as a motif. The political social and literary developments in France and Germany also affected the literature which was written in England.

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10

Arun Joshi’s “The Last Labyrinth” The Journey Within

*Shubh Kiran Sharma**

Arun Joshi is one of those Modern Indian Novelists in English. Who have broken new grounds in multi-dimensional ways. In his search for new themes he has “renounced the larger world in favour of the “inner man” and has engaged himself in a search for the essence of the human living”. An outstanding novelist of human predicament, Joshi has chartered almost in all his novels the inner crisis of the modern man. In fact, Joshi’s fictional world is revelation of a world where man is confronted by the self and the questions of his existence. His search is directed at the inscrutable region of human Psyche and he enters into that mysterious region of uncertainty and inscrutability. This effort of his makes him a great artist of psychological insight.

Joshi’s present novel *The Last Labyrinth* is a more ambitious novel extending the characteristic search of Arun Joshi’s heroes for roots and identification in a more involved technique of storytelling. But the confrontation of the individual this time is not with society but with forms and forces beyond the reckonings of reason and science. In fact the present novel considers more pertinently the questions raised in the earlier novels. The protagonist, Som Bhasker, is a modern millionaire often guided by reason and not by faith.

In the journey of life, Som Bhasker becomes a millionaire at the age of twenty five when his father, a rich industrialist of Bombay, dies leaving his entire business to him. He has married an extraordinary woman “Geeta” from whom he has two children. Som’s father has spent a quarter of a million on his education by sending him to the world’s finest universities. He has therefore grown into a clever and successful businessman who expands his empire and makes a name for himself in the industrial world of Bombay. He is however an egotist of stubborn nature and always tries to have his own ways.

From the very outset of the novel, Som realizes that he has “become a nuisance and that he has been fooling around like a clown performing before a looking glass: (10)”. He is constantly tormented by a great roaring hollowness inside his soul and the boredom and the fed-up-ness resulting from his variegated experiences. His “orchestras of discontent are in fact

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so frighteningly ceaseless that at the age of twenty five he becomes a worn out weary man incapable of spontaneous feeling" (14). He is always in a hurry "like a hare chased by unseen hounds (12)" In his own estimation, he is "wondering, curious, analysing, correlating, but getting nowhere (80)".

A thorough and deep study of the novel reveals that scepticism and highly rational approach become major hurdles in the ever-changing journey of Som's life. Being rationalist, he believes in intelligence and expediency. After establishing a huge business empire with Aftab he has an insatiable hunger physical, mental and material. He spends sleepless nights drinking and gobbling pills. He seeks substitute satisfaction in sex, wealth and fame only to find himself increasingly restless and realizes that: "I am dislocated. My mind in out of focus"

In the journey of life Som flits from one pleasure to another and from one woman to another. Anuradha, Geeta and Gargi are the major hauls in his journey of life. Anuradha exercises an overpowering fascination over Som. To acquire Anuradha for himself, for his soul and body, he makes frequent visits to Benaras. He feels entrapped by an obsolete world, decaying yet urbane-the world of Anuradha and Aftab. Geeta, his own wife is all that a wife could be- trusting, beautiful and well bred. She shows tremendous loyalty and courage in standing by him. Infact Geeta is credited with some subtle understanding of him though at times she finds it difficult to understand what was going on in his heart. Then Som opens his heart's book before Gargi, the daughter of the Sufi. Infact Gargi is the sublimated form of his wife to whom he asks to explain why after all man has been gifted with spirit? why man has a strange sensibility, urge or drive? Is there a meaning to it? Gargi Writes on the pad that: "there is no harm in believing that God exists (213)" and that we are all children trying to reach up to a crack in the door to peep into a room (p214):"

With the passing of the years Som's troubles get multiplied because of the terrible loneliness of his heart on one hand and awareness of the lack of relevance in life on the other hand. On the whole he finds the world meaningless. Whole life from birth to death seems meaningless to him. As a student he was upset by futile activities of life and begged the headmaster's wife to explain the meaning of it all. Later he becomes even more convinced that life is full of complications' ____ "a labyrinth within the labyrinths" (p.29)", like the lanes of Benaras. He calls life vanity of vanities which could be compared only to meaningless flight of stairs

(P.34)" Summarising his opinion about life, he says. "Nothing was straight forward, One was always running a hurdles race.(P.133)"

The questions about life and death continue to haunt him throughout his life. but he could not find any satisfactory answer to his questions. Being a highly intellectual as well as highly rational person, he would not accept any readymade solutions to his problems, such as irrational belief in supernatural elements. Som has no explanation to life's problems and as an ordent believer in Darwin, feels baffled when he finds that "Darwin didn't say how we are supposed to evolve further (P 132)." Som Bhaskar's existential anguish makes the journey of his life stressful and painful because life does not offer simple solutions to him like the ones that are available to the boy he meets in the hills. The boy's relationship with life and with, wants is so simple that he serves as a perfect contrast to Som Bhaskar. The boy has been looking for pebbles that one can see right through. Som asks him, And what if you don't find the pebble? to which the boy replies : Even then it is all right". Bhasker is depressed to find that a child so young has been contaminated in a such a manner.

In contrast to boy's simplicity, Som's yearning to have the best of both the world's the world of matter and of spirit, makes his life more complicated. He says. "What I needed, perhaps was something, somebody, somewhere, in which the two worlds combined (P.82)" When such wishes of Bhasker are not fulfilled he becomes the victim of frustration, depression and despair. Speaking of his unfortunate plight he observes. But I was just not myself. That was where the rub lay.... I had sarrows that did not let me breathe.... Then, there was the greatest sorrow of them all- that no one even guessed: There was the sorrow of idleness.... But there was always that bit of me, a large bit, some where between the head and the chest, just idling about like a stationary engine getting involved with nothing. It made me feel as though i was asleep (p. 109)."

Thus "The Last Labyrinth" comes to end with the probable possibilities of coming to faith. It makes a fervent appeal to understand the true spirit of India and resolve its apparent contradiction through faith beyond the logic of science and reason. It won't be wrong to say that many of Joshi's novels explore the "dark mossy Labyrinths of the soul that languish forever, hidden from the dazzling light of the sun" (The strong case of Billy Biswas)". A number of various attempts on the part of the protagonists are made to arrive at self-realization. All these attempts are born of suffering and humiliation but these also present the solutions to life's various problems. In fact, Joshi suggests that mere rational

approaches to life's problems are not the solutions of the riddles of life. Einstein once said, "We have to jump out of our mind". If the explanations given by Darwin and Freud are not totally wrong, these are partially true. Even Darwin's theory of evolution fails to give satisfactory answers to certain queries regarding life and its secrets. Perhaps Anuradha's belief in this respect is worth quoting when she says, "May be Krishna begins where Darwin Left off" (P,132)".

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11

Quest For Identity in Arun Joshi's *The Strange Case of Billy Biswas*

*Balraj Kaur**

The Strange Case of Billy Biswas centres round Billy's spiritual quest for identity – the identity that he tries to seek in the contemporary world or the identity that the primitive world keeps on reminding him in his dreams and hallucinations. Identity is the answer to the very compelling questions: Who am I? Where have I come from? Where am I going? Man being a social being lives in an organized world according to set patterns conforming to the rules and regulations set up by social institutions like law, religion and morality. A normal life provides a man an identity in accordance to these parameters. However, in case of some men this identity may not seem to satisfy the inner cravings which demand a deeper search into the very meaning and purpose of existence. This paper proposes to consider the 'strange case' of Billy Biswas as a quest for identity when the normal social parameters seem ill equipped to satisfy a deeply inquisitive and restless soul with regards to its identity.

Billy himself feels as though he is not "Bimal Biswas, graduate of Columbia, the only son of a Supreme Court Judge, husband of Meena Biswas, and father of a handsome child"(120) rather "a tribal himself"(129). The fact is that Billy's wish to live like a primitive man in a primitive world makes Billy a restless soul, of which, of course, Billy is not quite sure. It is only Tuula Lindgren, Billy's Swedish friend whom he has met in America, who recalls a glimpse of Billy's restless soul and understands it. As she observes, Billy "...feels something inside him But he is not yet sure. Sometimes he is afraid of it and tries to suppress it. A great force, urkraft ... a primitive force. He is afraid of it and tries to suppress it... But it is very strong in him, much stronger than in you or me. It can explode any time."(23) This "something inside", "urkraft" as Tuula observes, scares him, frightens him at times. He feels somewhere suspended between the social concept of this "...world, of the everyday world of government offices, power breakdowns, stock exchanges, etc."(53) represented by his father, and his own yearning for that unknowable world which exists "at the periphery of this one, above it and below it and around it, of which we know nothing until we are in them."(54)

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He is caught in the conflict between the norms of the civilized life and the primitive life. As Eric Fromm says "The development of human race as far as we have any knowledge of it can be characterized as the emergence of man from nature, from mother, from the bonds of blood and soil. In the beginning of modern history, man still clings to these primary bonds. He finds his security by going back, or holding on to these primary bonds. He still feels identified with the world of animals and trees, and tries to find unity by remaining one with the natural world." (Fromm, p53) He wishes to escape from the stifling, choking, phoney, artificial and meaningless existence in the civilized world but escape from life is not possible. In terms of psychoanalysis, he is a character who is trying to identify himself with either of the two dimensions of his consciousness. He tries to explore whether he belongs to the contemporary social life or to the primitive, private, darker self, which the critics call the 'real self'. He tries to run away from the mask that the society has made him put on and accept what he 'really' is. But it is the society or the social compulsions that keep trying fetching him back to the artificial, arbitrary and pretentious world of appearances. Billy is obsessed with the "dark mossy labyrinths of the soul that languish forever, hidden from the dazzling light of the sun." (8) suggesting Billy's need to achieve an integrity with the dark mysteries of the soul which lie not in the world outside but within.

Billy had always felt a magnetic pull towards his inner primitive self as Billy's mother alludes to his attempt to run away from home at the age of fourteen. Later in the course of the novel, Billy himself tell Romi that he had gone with his mother to spend a few weeks at her brother's home in Bhubaneswar. The moment he emerges from the railway station he feels "something odd started to work within me. It was as though a slumbering part of me had suddenly come awake." (122) He feels inspired as he has never felt earlier the way he was feeling at that time. For the first time he feels "a sudden interest in my own identity. Who was I? Where had I come from? Where was I going?" (122) Such a thing is felt by almost every adolescent when strange passions are roused leading to getting fascinated by painting, literature, science etc. It is the stage when life starts getting moulded in a particular cast and Billy's life and destiny was certainly getting moulded that way. This was the first sign of his being cut out for a different sort of life – a life where he was to go in for a quest to reach the reality of his self and life on whole. It wasn't due to pastoral and arcadian atmosphere but because "...there was something else, something much more insubstantial that lurked about the place soaking everything in a

magical glow." (123) This feeling makes him get involved with something that is quiet insubstantial, hazy, unclear and ambiguous. It is in search of this that he gets attracted towards the adivasis who he feels have a clue to this insubstantial something. Billy seems to have realized the 'shades of the spirit' that "...was much, much older than the time when man first learned to build temples. If anyone had a clue to it, it was only the adivasis who carried about their knowledge in silence, locked behind their dark inscrutable faces". (124)

After his school in Dehradun, he goes to England to finish his school and later to America to study engineering but there gets drawn to anthropology and therefore leaves engineering. As far as the reason for opting anthropology is concerned he says "I don't really know. I am afraid. What I do know is that this is what I have always wanted to read [he waved towards the stacks of books]. All I want to do in life is to visit the places they describe, meet the people who live there, find out about the aboriginalness of the world". (13-14) In anthropology he finds a release, a freedom to pursue the hidden and distant cravings of the self. In America Billy lives at Harlem amidst the appalling, shabby, uncomfortable surroundings inhabited by the Negroes as he considers the place "the most human place he could find" (9) and where life is free from all artificialities and formalities and also that "white America ... was much too civilized for him." (9) The desire to be free, liberated, unorganized is reflected in the sort of things in his library. "Two of the stacks were devoted exclusively to anthropology. The third presented a mélange that to ..., made no sense at all. It contained everything from old copies of the National Geographic Magazine to the latest pornography that was being peddled in the times square; from learned treatises on black magic and witchcraft to a critique of the theory of relatively... a series of nearly forty biographies including several on Van Gogh... On the top of one of the bookcases were piled at least a hundred albums of jazz music." (13)

Living among the Bhils in the forests of the Maikala Hills, Billy finds his identity, his roots. The world of Dhuria, of Bilasia, Kala Pahar, the tribals make him feel 'established'. In Bilasia he finds a companion close to his soul, his future, his past, the very purpose of his life. Bilasia identifies with that part of his personality which he had lost earlier, completes him and renders him physical as well as psychic fulfillment. His sexual experience with Bilasia, as such, is not only the fulfillment of his carnal desire but also a journey into the inner recesses of his soul that lead him to the truest perception of life. Bilasia represents to him the primitive life

where he is welcome to pursue whatever he feels like. There is no stifling possessiveness in her world – rather she offers him complete freedom to attain integrity with his real inner self. He encounters the real world and forsakes the world based on hypocrisy and shallowness. He leaves Meena who “deadens his senses” (Abraham, p188) and Rima who “corrupts him” (Abraham, p188) and gets involved in Bilasia and her world which his soul has always craved for. Bilasia provides him with an anchor that he has all his life been searching for. The world of Bilasia is a “friendly, simple, pure and disinterested (in the sense of Bhagwadgita) atmosphere” (171) where “new vistas of knowledge are opened for Billy”. (171) Bilasia is symbolic of “nature’s fecundity; she is pure subjectivity beneath all civilization, ‘an essence of the primitive force’ which embodies their mythic dance and ritual, the frantic drumming, the constant footwork, the moving and breaking of formations, the yelling’. Billy’s contact with her, although initiated by mutual sexuality, is a psychic one, a union of anima and animus ... merged with her, he becomes like her, the whole earth, free from all ambition, all civilization”. (Mohan, p24-25) It is this union that makes Billy a mature and wiser man who can better understand life, his duties and responsibilities towards it and the mankind around. He is no more a man confined to his self, rather becomes one whose world expands beyond his narrow existence. He is a sort of king, a benefactor, a priest for the tribals who revives a dead man, makes the tiger run away and gets involved with them in realizing his high sense of duty. He fulfils his duty in working as a “balm on the aching hearts of the primitives”. (Chawla, p6) He gets selflessly involved in the “basic ingredient of human life and human relations”. (Chawla, p6) He becomes for the people a prophet, a priest, rather a redeemer. He is for them “like rain on parched land, like balm on a wound”. (159-160) He identifies himself with the people, their needs, their sufferings and helps them by providing them with respite as he realizes the suffering humanity even in the primitive world. He realizes “how unhappy everyone really is, even here”. (191) He becomes a caring, considerate and responsible person who like Wordsworth listens to the ‘still sad music of humanity’. He seeks his absorption into “a world of emotional fullness – in a world of meaningful relatedness”. (Jain, p54)

However when his family comes to know about Billy’s whereabouts they get into action in order to reclaim Billy not only for the family but for the civilized society and the so-called civilized world does him to death in the most cruel and brutal manner. His quest for identity is forcibly throttled by the social machinery when he was so close to reaching his destination.

Billy progresses through the stages of moral confusion, moral consciousness and social concern which show his sure attainment of wisdom and maturity. “Since man is always groping in the dark in his search of his true self, his individuality, his identity” (Verma, p59), he does get successful, if not completely, at least partially in “comprehending the reality and meaning of life”. (Verma, p60) Among the tribals he finds “not only his roots but also identity” (Mittal, p176). The identity that Billy had always sought after since his childhood in the family, society, India and America, is realized among the tribals, in the roots, in ancient culture wherein lies the “panacea for the ills of the modern society” (Mittal, p167) and also the likes of Billy Biswas. Though he is made to pay heavily for this realization of his identity, he does attain peace and harmony in his inner self, where the world of the spiritual, metaphysical, fate, destiny and God converge.

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12

Demythising and Reinterpretation of Myth in Swarajbir's *Krishna*

Disha Bains*

God of fire I am! No simple food matches my
hunger Give me the food I deserve. Khandava Jungle
baked in the fire The only offer I do require. (28)

Swarajbir opens his play *Krishna* with above quoted lines from the *adiparva* of *Mahabharata*. This quotation indicates the popular myth according to which Khandava jungle was reduced to ashes by Krishna and Arjuna to cure the indigestion of the God of fire caused by the sinful deeds of tribesmen. Swarajbir also goes back to the age old myth of Krishna to conceive the play. The whole play revolves around "Krishna" who is known as a beautiful notorious child, the charming lover, the mighty king and the incarnate Hindu God. The playwright deconstructs and reinterprets these myths in a way that mythical setting of the play transcends the boundaries of time and space and negotiates with the contemporary socio-political realities.

"Myth" is a word derived from Greek word *mythos* which can be defined as utterance. On first place, myth can be defined as a story, a narrative usually concerned with the supernatural events, gods and goddesses or even human beings. But to limit mythology only to a story will be to reduce its importance. Mythology is a tale of our remote past; those narratives which are held dear and meant to be preserved by the people are carried forward to the next generations in the form of mythology. Mythology is not only the index of primitive man's mode of thinking but also reflects the psyche of people. In the creation of mythology, unconscious and collective mind operates instead of conscious and individual mind. So myths are the stories formed by a particular cultural group handed over from one generation to another generation. Romila Thapar says that mythology is the mean of preserving the information in the societies where the oral tradition rather than the use of literature was the means of communication. In this way, myths make our past "intelligible and meaningful" .(Thapar 756) Mythology is deeply rooted in the social reality of a particular time period is evident from the fact that there is constant modification in mythology with the changing social and cultural scenarios. This constant modification of mythology establishes a link

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between past and present. Romila Thapar calls mythology a "charter of belief" which "serves to protect cultural continuity and provides through its theme a point of cultural equilibrium. In a historical tradition therefore the themes of myths act as forces of continuity". (756). Mythology, in this way records what is permanent and eternal in humanity and establishes the continuity between past and present.

The major sources of Indian Mythology are four *Vedas*, *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana* and *Puranas*. The hymns sung during Vedic period (1400BC) were collectively called *Vedas* among which Rig-Veda is the oldest one. Great Indian epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* are the products of classical age. *Puranas* were also composed at that time. These myths are so popular with the common people that even children are familiar with the major mythical heroes and stories. Being so close to the collective consciousness of the society, it is quite obvious that literature cannot escape the labyrinths of Indian mythology.

Swarajbir also uses the mythology as a vehicle to comment on contemporary reality. One of the important features of the play is the demythisation of the divine aura of Krishna as a God incarnate. The hero of an epic like *Mahabharata* is portrayed in the negative light in the play. Krishna is the most celebrated deity of Indian mythology. His popularity is not surpassed by any other Indian Hindu God or Goddess. The mythical character of Krishna as it is perceived and worshipped today, has two prominent aspects or the phases of life which are surprisingly far away from each other. Swarajbir also draws the attention of the readers towards the fact in his introduction to the play that Krishna is the amalgam of two characters. He is portrayed as an ordinary cattle herder and flute player in the first phase of his life and the mighty king of Dwarka in the second phase of his life. The important scriptures discussing Krishna's story are the *Mahabharata*, the *Harivamsa*, the *Bhagavata Purana* and the *Vishnu Purana*.

The play deals with the second phase of Krishna's life. Krishna of the present play is entrapped between his lost past and his present where he is the king and the politician. The play starts with a prologue or *prastavna* which is a subtle declaration of the theme of the play. The half awakened atmosphere of the stage indicates that the play is going to explore a narrative with ambiguities and obscurities. By calling the narrative of play "an ancient tale" (32) in the chorus song, the mythical setting of the play is put forth by the author. The author himself speaks through the *sutradhar* in the prologue. The prologue is important not only because it hints about

the upcoming events of the play but also because it discusses the problems of exploring mythology. While specifically talking about the myth used in the play, *Sutradhar* also comments on some fundamental questions regarding myth. The fact that exploration of mythology is a fairly complicated task is clear from following lines:

It's an ancient tale my dear friend
A tale from the highly primitive age
Where to begin
How to explore
And go through the layers
Not an easy job! (32).

The play gives the psychological portrayal of Krishna who is fictionalized as a person caught between the conflicts of his all-pervasive powers as the ruler of city Dwarka and his lost oneness with the nature as a cattle herder and a flute player. Although enjoying his endless powers as a king, Krishna still longs for his lost past which is very dear to his heart. The arrival of Gopal, his childhood friend, reveals the nostalgia of Krishna for his childhood days spent at Gokula. The mirage of the lost past haunts him again and again. The situation becomes very ironic when Krishna, in spite of his very visible longings for Gokula, decides to stay amidst the labyrinth of the political maneuverings. Krishna of this phase is also not in harmony with the first phase of his life when he was one of the tribesmen of Gokula and the sharer of all their sorrows and happiness. This conflict of his personality intensifies and reaches its climax in the twelfth scene of this play which is more like a dream sequence. This scene is employed as a dramatic device to reveal the fragmentation in the personality of Krishna. The scene depicts the confrontation between *Kaali* and *Gwalan*. *Kaali* symbolises oppressive state power and the inhuman destruction and devastation it causes. The death dance of *Kaali* in battlefield is dreadfully devastating and horrible. In sharp contrast to the death dance of *Kaali*, there is selfless and pure love of *Gwalan*. She symbolises love in its purest form, without any trace of wickedness:

No! My dear Keshav! No! . . . feel the fragrance of
the flowers in my limbs! See the lights of yearning in
my eyes! Dear Keshav see! There are drops of your
longings on my lips! (74)

Gwalan personifies the past but *Kaali* is the personification of the present and the future of Krishna. The conflicting and tense atmosphere of the scene is set from the very first dialogue of the scene when *Kaali* calls Krishna her *Rajkumar* and *Gwalan* addresses him as *Kanhaiya* and

Keshav. This tension grows with the progress of the scene and reaches its climax when *Kaali* overcomes *Gwalan* and takes bewildered Krishna with her. Unable to escape the net woven by *Kaali*; entrapped Krishna even views the sky as dull and lifeless. Krishna, the God incarnate and the possessor of immense kingly powers, appears a plaything in the hands of *Kaali* and the readers find him unable to come out of the labyrinths of monarchy. After being wounded with the arrow of Jara, dying Krishna vainly tries to cover up his defeat by calling it his own divine decision. But Jara declines his claim of divinity and reduces his fate to the level of any ordinary person, "Krishna! You know thoroughly no verdict is ever a divine verdict . . . every verdict is human from the start to the end". (88)

The play goes back to the phase when society was converting into a food producing society from a food gathering society. This phase was clearly marked with the devastation of small tribes to acquire the land for agriculture. The time was marked with very prominent changes as the large kingdoms were establishing and the time of small tribes was leaving behind. Romila Thapar draws attention in her book *The Early India* towards the fact that with the decline of clan based society, the land which was initially cultivated by a clan was divided among smaller groups or families called *kula* (121). The most capable man was elected chief but later these elected chiefs started to enjoy some privileges over other members of society. These privileges later prepared a ground for the immense power of kingship. The word king is derived from, as Romila Thapar suggests, a root which means "to shine" or "to lead". (120) Increasing dependence of economy on agriculture led to major social changes as well. Even the war of *Mahabharata* was marked with the extinction of clan based societies. With the arrival of Aryan people, the non-Aryan or *Dasyus* were considered inferiors. The conflict between Aryan and non-Aryan people were the conflict of natives and colonizer. Envy for immense cattle wealth of non-Aryans and the need of Aryans to acquire the land for agriculture resulted in the uprootment of the natives. Along with this devastation of their habitats, their culture, religion and language also suffered from great setback. The theme of colonization of natives runs throughout the play.

Jara of Swarajbir is well aware of the fact that religion and language are constructed discourses to serve the class of exploiters, "Poor language! Nothing more than a slave! It is their will that shapes words and shlokas according to their whims. They mould and present the words according to their wishes". (36) He is politically awakened leader of tribals who

knows that to resist the oppression is the only way to survive. Fury and rage caused by tribal uprootment results in complete rejection of these discourses and a firm decision to get armed and fight back. Thus by paralleling the contemporary political and economic exploitation with the exploitation of non-Aryan people by Aryan rulers, Swarajbir gives the new dimensions to this myth. In the introduction to the play Swarajbir refuses to take it merely as an accident that an Aryan hero and God incarnate is assassinated by a low caste forest dweller. This fury against exploiting classes visibly left its marks on popular mythology of the time and created a myth in which even God, who is otherwise considered immortal, is killed by a *bheel*. The purity, innocence and oneness with nature, which were the characteristic features of earlier phase of Krishna's life, are substituted with greed for power which results in political intrigues and violence. The person in power is supposed to be vindictive, prejudiced and unjust to correspond with the basic instinct of power. Power leaves no room for the basic human values like idealism, purity, equality and love. It is truly heart rendering for Krishna that his most trustworthy friends and courtiers are plotting to reach the royal throne. Krishna, the Almighty, becomes a victim of political maneuverings. It becomes ironical that the person, who is on pinnacle of his divine and political powers, is terrifically alone and hollow from inside.

Although Swarajbir deconstructs the personality of Krishna, contrary to the popular belief that Krishna is God incarnate and a benevolent king, still in spite of all his callousness, he retains the sympathy of the audience as a victim of the world of politics which leaves almost no space for genuine human action. In spite of all this, the plight of the person who outwardly seems at the peak of power but is utterly alone in absence of genuine human love and trust is fictionalised in the play. The play emerges as the tragedy of a person who loses all his humane aspects when he gains the infinite powers of monarchy.

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13

The Plight of Black Women in Alice Walker's The Color Purple

*Radhe Shyam**

Alice Walker who is recognized as one of the leading voices among the black American women writers has produced an acclaimed and varied body of works. In her novels and short stories, she depicts powerfully the journey of a black woman's life from birth to death characterized by her subjugation to physical and psychological violence sensual exploitation and oppression and a denial of freedom to live a life of wholeness on her own terms. She explores the various aspects of the life of the black without any sign to conceal or gloss over any of its aspects make her fiction different from that of most of the other writers particularly those who have remained preoccupied only with the theme of the oppression of the black by the white. And, in the process, she focused her reader's attention on all of these attitudes, customs and structures which along with the racist oppression, have entrapped them in a cycle of misery and degradation.

The Pulitzer prize winning novel, *The Color Purple* (1982) explores not only the effects of sexism and racism, but also the black women's determination to overcome these barriers and emerge unscathed and whole ultimately. All the women characters of the novel exhibit this determination and attain a state of autonomous selfhood defying and overcoming their dilapidated and opprobrious state in order to live a purposeful life and be content with themselves. The novel depicts the oppression faced by the main protagonist Celie, a black female as well as the other minor black female characters Sofia, Nettie and Squeak and against which they struggle in their rights to equality and freedom. Written in epistolary form, "this novel chronicles thirty years in the life of Celie who moves from incest victim to lesbian love and entrepreneurship (Watking 7).

Walker shows in *The color Purple* that the oppression of a black woman has to face in her family begins right from her birth. The birth of a female child in some of the black families is considered a source of dismay and disappointments. On the other hand, the birth of a son is a matter of honor for parents. After the death of Tashi's father, her mother refuses to remarry and feels that she "has five boy children she can now

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do whatever she wants as she has become honorary man" (*The Color Purple* 150). In the African context, the role of the family is so crucial that family structures and social values function in such a way that a black girl grows up looking upon herself as an inferior to a son—less opportunity, less property, less status, less power and virtually no choices. Childhood which is considered an age of innocenceness and freedom, becomes the worst kind of experience for a black girl when she is pushed into the household drudgeries since her childhood. Life of Celie in her early childhood is only a period of initiation into 'domestic slavery' for the rest of her life. She tells Sofia, "I used to git mad at my mammy cause she put a lot of work on me" (*TCP* 40). Celie first loses the ability to control her own life when her mother dies. This forces her to assume the duties of her mother and such household duties deny her the opportunities to live her own life as a child. It not only affects seriously her physical, emotional and intellectual growth but also infuses in her psyche the lesson of self denial for the sake of others in the family.

Besides this, through the life of Celie, Alice Walker shows that in a male dominated atmosphere of the black family, a black girl has to submit before her father, the highest authority of the family. She becomes a puppet in the hands of her family. Celie's stepfather forbids her to go to school "Pa took me out of school. He never care that I love it" (*TCP* 11). In some of the traditional black tribes like Onlika, a girl child not supposed to go to school. On the other hand, the boy children are insisted to go to school, "screaming and kicking" (*TCP* 146). Celie is shattered to pieces both physically and psychologically by her 'Pa' who controls her sexual life by pushing her into sexual slavery even at a tender age of fourteen when she is totally ignorant of the functions of male and female body: "Dear God, I am fourteen years old, I am I have always been a good girl. Maybe you can give me a sign letting me know what is happening to me" (*TCP* 1). Celie's mother's ill-health does not allow her to involve herself in sexual act with her husband. As a result he satisfies his lust through Celie. It causes the birth of two children and Celie is warned not to tell anybody about her children's father. The negligence and her sexual exploitation which have been ruthlessly imposed on her fortune never allows her mind to even think of her independence and soon she becomes used to this kind of plight. Celie's earlier sexual experiences, rape committed by her father denies her to enjoy sex even with her husband afterwards. Here "Walker shows how the failure of a black mother to give the knowledge

of sex to her daughter destroys her life completely and wholly and this becomes a barrier in her life to live a life of wholeness" (Rich 284).

Sex plays a crucial role in empowering Sofia and Celie's mother also. Sofia tells Celie about her sexual relations with Harpo. "He don't want a wife, he want a dog" (*TCP* 62) And, similar experiences of Celie's mother proves that love for a black woman comes in the form of mere lust. The brutality of lust of Alphonso, Celie's father can be seen when he demands sex from Celie's mother without caring that she is 'already half dead', having been recently given birth to a child. Thus, sex for a black woman becomes as something which is done to her but never as something which she enjoys.

Mr—— in order to show his superiority and keep Celie under his control not only frequently criticizes her by saying, "You black, you pore, you ugly, you a woman, you nothing at all" (*TCP* 187) but also beats her cruelly with no reason and Celie accepts the beating as her fate out of fear. She says, "he beat me like he beat the children" (*TCP* 23). Violence against a black woman even in her own family makes her submissive and ultimately fills in her psyche that a woman is an inferior being having no identity of her own. A black lady is in bondage not only in her own family but community also demands complete submission from its female members. The individuality of a black girl is much influenced by the rituals, traditions, customs and values of a community. Sometimes they limit and control her thoughts also. No one is supposed to challenge them. If any female refuses to obey to follow the community rules, the worst is done to her. Tashi's aunt is sold to trader because she no longer fit into village life. "This aunt refused to marry the man chosen for her. Refused to bow to the chief. Did nothing but lay up, crack cola nuts between her teeth and giggle" (*TCP* 145).

Not only family and community but the racist society also offers a number of crises in the life of a black woman. Racial discrimination denies her to live a normal and natural life and to create her own identity. The worst kind of consequences of racism in the life of a black woman can be seen through the sufferings of Sofia. Millie, the mayor's wife asks Sofia to work for her as a maid but she refuses to do it. The mayor, as a white being, having a sense of superiority cannot tolerate such a clear cut refusal from a black, an inferior being and slaps her. Sofia, who has a strong urge to live a life of wholeness cannot bear it and knocks him down. Soon there is an encounter: "The polices come, start slinging the children off the mayor, bang they heads together. They drag Sofia to the ground.

They blind her in one eye. She swole from head to foot" (TCP 82). This is the beginning which is followed by a long agonizing process of destruction of the self-physical, psychological and spiritual. The notion of freedom, her own identity and a life of wholeness ceases to exist for her when as a prisoner "they put Sofia to work in a prison laundry. All day long from five to eight she washing clothes. Dirty convict uniforms, nasty sheets and blankets piled way over her head" (TCP 83).

Alice Walker very powerfully describes the plight of a black woman's life characterized by her subjection to physical and psychological violence, sexual exploitation and oppression. She also depicts the heroic struggles of a black lady to break the shackles of her bondage, to liberate her body from the chains of mere biological function and to live a life freedom and wholeness on her own terms. Celie, in the beginning of the novel has been treated merely as an object of sexual gratification by her step-father Alphonso as well as by her husband Albert. All these exploitations make her only a silent sufferer and a dead wood and reduces her to the position of a slave. But, with the arrival of severely ill Shug Avery, a blue singer, Celie's process of self growth and development starts. It is the friendship of Shug, which gives a new meaning to the life of Celie. Celie realizes the beauty of her body when Shug makes her to realize so and experiences a new kind of feeling, a happiness, having such beauty and she exclaims with joy "its mine" (TCP 75) and begins to love the beauty of her body. For the first time, Walker's woman achieves an affirmation of self which is the "reappropriation of her body, the most exploited target of male aggression" (Ross 26). Now, she begins to feel that her life which had stopped with Mr — "but start up again with Shug" (TCP 85).

Shug awakens Celie not only towards the beauty of her body but also helps her to be economically independent. She asks her, "you not my maid, I brought you here to love you and help you get on your feet" (TCP 191) and helps in making her to sew pants. Her pants become so popular that she starts a business of sewing pants. By sewing pants, Celie not only achieves economic independence by making something for herself rather than for other people. She also achieves the freedom of life style by wearing the pants which make Celie look more like a man. For Celie, changing her clothes is another manifestation of her freedom.

After economic independence Celie's spiritual development also takes place when Shug teaches Celie to see 'God' in the light of truth. Celie, who has firm faith in God, Imagines God as a "big and old and tall and graybearded and white" (TCP 175). Celie has blind faith in God and

when she has no one to share her pain and sufferings with, she shares it with God and keeps deep faith in his justice. The change in Celie also brings change in the attitudes of many other characters. Albert, Celie's husband changes the most. The greatest achievement for Celie comes when she is surrounded by the people whom she loves.

The Color Purple articulates the complexity of the struggles of black women in America. Walker as a black feminist writer has always been concerned with the plight of black women. And, through this novel she shows black women can overcome all suppressions and come up as liberated beings. Thus, we find gender bias and oppression of women emerges as a powerful theme of the novel as the powerless women are being suppressed by equally powerless men.

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A Quest For Identity: A Study of Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters*

Nitasha Baloria*

The Female sex constitutes more than half of the population in the world but is never treated as equal to the male sex because of the reason unknown. She has the same mental and moral power, yet she is not recognized as his equal. In such conditions, the question of searching her identity is justified. In this male dominated society different roles are assigned to her- of a daughter, a wife, a mother, a home maker and she is expected to submit, serve, sacrifice and tolerate every ill against her peacefully. In the process of justifying each role given to her, she forgets to justify her own self. Gender equality is, first and foremost, a human right. Women are entitled to live in dignity and in freedom from fear. The illustration of Sita, Savitri and Gandhari are always expected to be followed by her. But the noticeable point is that these ideal women existed only in epics, they were princesses and queens and were far from the pains and sufferings in the modern world in which modern woman, has no identity of her own. She lives for others and breathe for others. And the situation becomes more deadly when we take it in Indian context where women must defer to her husband and make the marital home pleasant for him.

Among the prolific women novelists like Kamla Markanday, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande and Jhumpa Lahiri; Manju Kapur is also a distinguished figure in the world of novels. She has written four novels: i.e. *Difficult Daughters* (1998), *A Married Woman* (2002), *Home* (2006), and *The Immigrant* (2008). She is a post colonial writer who intuitively perceives the position of women in a patriarchal society and deals with the problems of women. A wave of longing struggle of women to establish an identity is seen throughout the novels of Manju Kapur. This paper will make an attempt to focus on Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters*. It deals with Virmati's struggle with the outer world to satisfy her own little world which is hidden from everyone until she makes an attempt to make her life more clear and meaningful. The novel stresses on the woman's need for self- fulfilment autonomy, self-realization, independence and self- actualization. In her protagonist, Kapur has dexterously mingled the complex and convoluted emotions of guilt and cravings, drive and regression, clarity and confusion. It reflects the

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predominant characteristics of modern Indian young generation woman, with the strong aspirations and determinations, in the mind of the protagonist, Virmati. Its prime focus is on aspiration, trials and tribulations that are witnessed by the protagonist.

Based partially on the life of Kapur's own mother the novel evokes the multiple frustrations encountered by the central character, Virmati. A young woman born in Amritsar into an austere Punjabi family, who did not wish to live her mother's life and went to study in Lahore rejecting the confinement of her mother's world which revolved around domesticity, marriage and child bearing. Virmati's history is reconstructed in retrospect by her daughter Ida who undertakes a journey to know her mother's past. The theme of searching one's own identity and having control over one's destiny prevails throughout the novel. The novel shows the three generations of women (Kasturi, Virmati and Ida) and unveils their sense of disillusionment. Virmati is in a constant struggle with the world for searching her own self. She is the eldest daughter of Kasturi and Suraj Prakash. She has eleven siblings and being the eldest child, the burden of household work and younger brothers-sisters was dropped upon Virmati's tender shoulders. Thus, she attained maturity at a younger age.

When Virmati was sixteen, her mother had conceived eleventh child. On a chilled December night, she gives birth to a feeble girl child, Paro. After this delivery, her health is totally crushed. Her body needed strength, the fresh air and the changed environment was recommended to revive her broken health. So, Suraj Prakash, Virmati's father decided Virmati to send her alongwith her mother to Dalhousie. Her life changes a little in Dalhousie, on the arrival of Shakuntla, her cousin sister. Shakuntla was a prototype of modern woman. Young Virmati's craving for higher education deeply enrooted and became firm when she met Shakuntala, who was studying M.Sc. in Chemistry in Lahore. There was curiosity, vigorous enthusiasm along with the yearnings for modern life and higher education arises and gradually enrooting solidly in her mind. She (Shakuntla) rejected her family tradition of marrying at an early age and chooses her studies over marriage. Shakuntla's presence and her talks made an influence on Virmati. She explains her blissful days in Lahore to Virmati,

“We travel, entertain ourselves in the evenings, follow each other's works, read papers, attend seminars. One of them is even going abroad for higher studies”. (*Difficult Daughters*, 17).

She also emphasized her modern views by asserting that: “It was

useless looking for answers inside the home. One had to look outside. To education, freedom, and the bright lights of Lahore colleges" (15).

Shakuntla's presence ignited a spark in Virmati's desire of leading an independent life and her quest for identity. Impressed by it Virmati blurts abruptly to Shakuntala, "I want to be like you, Pehnji" (15). She wanted to be like Shakuntla. She wanted to break the deep-rooted conventions of morality made by the society, especially for a girl. She undertakes a journey of searching her own self and leading an independent life but to her, it leaves her in the midway with no achievement. But she remains strong. Charlotte Perkins in an article on the new woman remarks: "Here she comes running, out of prison, and off the pedestal; chains off; crown off; halo off, just a live woman".

The major crisis in her life, however, springs from her love for the Professor. Her craving for education and longing to be like her cousin 'Shaku Pehnji' leads her way to the threshold of the Oxford-returned English Professor Harishchandra. He arrives in Amritsar as a tenant and neighbour to Virmati. His arrival also brings a hurricane in the life of young Virmati and gradually her love affair bloomed with the Professor. Her acquaintance with the Professor opens up new realm for her. She admires the Professor's effort of teaching his wife. Her aspiration to gain academic lore gets her entangled in an affair with the Professor Harish. The man of seemingly sublime and sober nature, in verity, turns out to be a sycophant, who cheaply spoils the life of Virmati to satisfy his thirst for keeping her in awe. Even in his love letters to Virmati, the Professor pretended that the sender of the letters is a girl. Ultimately she breaks the traditions and old family system. When she is compelled to marry the canal engineer, she protests and writes a letter to Professor Harish whom she loves dearly. When she rejects this marriage proposal, she is treated more harshly. She just beholds each happening occurring around her and keeps mum but soon she takes her decision in spite of several unprecedented hurdles. She even does not tolerate the irresolute attitude of Harish, she directly scolds him when he shows his helplessness to marry her and doubts his love: "Be honest with me. I can bear anything but this continuous irresolution. Swarna is right. Men do take advantage of women!" (149)

It is interesting to note that Virmati talks of her identity, her freedom but her freedom is confined only to her body and heart. She does not attempt to utilize her education as Shakuntla did. Virmati's illicit relation with professor makes her life more crucial. One more bolt comes to her when she becomes pregnant and finds that her love Harish for whom she

revolted against each emotional and social part of her life is indifferent to her state, she splits into pieces. She herself goes for an abortion to be done. After abortion she realizes half the meaning to be called woman and the illusion of romantic love. After much difficulty and condemnation she is married to the Prof. Harish, the second stage of her suffering begins. In the house of Harish, she is not considered an identity but the second wife of Harish who has snatched the rights of his first wife Ganga. She is a sinner to the backbone. When she dies, she is neither cremated according to her wishes nor her voice and her identity is recognized by anybody. Even her daughter (Ida) does not consider the ways of her mother justified. She, who had not wanted to be mourned in any way. When I die, ... I want my body donated. My eyes, my heart, my kidneys, my organ that can be of use. That way someone will value me after I have gone ... (1). Thus through this noble will even after death Virmati wants to keep her own identity safe on funeral fire. The honour which she could not earn in her lifetime from both the family members and society and now after death she wanted it on funeral pyre.

Thus while concluding we can say that in the whole novel we see Virmati's craving for identity and her struggle for the same. We see the budding of a '**New Woman**' in Virmati who does not want 'to be a rubber doll for others to move as they willed' (85). But though she dares to cross one patriarchal threshold, she is caught into another where her free spirit is curbed and all she does is 'adjust, compromise and adapt'. She could have put her foot down saying 'she will be her own mistress and relate to him with dignity or not at all. Perhaps the words were at the back of her mind, teasing her tongue with their shadowy sounds (236) but she does not. May be her mind had gone "soft and pulpy with repeated complying". (236) Thus, in Virmati we see the incipient New Woman who is conscious, introspective, educated, wants to carve a life for herself, to some extent she even conveys a personal vision of womanhood by violating current social codes yet she lacks confidence, self control, farsightedness and is psychically imprisoned with an underlying need to be emotionally and intellectually dependant on a superior force... Professor Harish and it is precisely this knowledge through which the patriarchy works. She fails to break the 'dependence syndrome' (Nahal: 1991: 17) and halts on the path to full human status. But the question remains the same, "Does Virmati blossom into a 'New Woman' in the real sense?" The answer is "NO".

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15

Study of Social Issues in *The Last Flicker*

*Nisha Verma**

Often the cultural information, historical background or economic condition is presupposed in the source language text but not located explicitly in it. To make it explicit or to keep it implicit depends on the strategy of the translator. Translators are after all social beings. As stressed by the German School, they are "engaged in a highly social activity controlled by interactive communicative needs of real people in real social contexts" (Robinson 176). Though translation is an individual activity, it is a social enterprise too that can not be viewed in isolation. Translation strategies are determined by the context, demands of the age in which translation is being made, expectations and taste of audience at different points in time, intertwined with the patronage.

All the above mentioned issues are very relevant for the study of Gurdial Singh's Punjabi novel *Marhi Da Deeva*, translated as *The Last Flicker (Flicker)* in English by Ajmer Singh Rode. It is available in two versions, one published in 1993 by Sahitya Academy and another recently in 2010 by National Book Trust.

Gurdial Singh is a true son of the soil. He was born on 10 January 1933 at Jaito in district Faridkot, Malwa region of Punjab. The story of the novel has an intimate connection with the culture of Malwa, that permeates every aspect of this work as is the case with other works of Gurdial Singh. Malwa comes alive in his novels both as a place in history and as a cultural metaphor. His work needs to be placed within the wider historical and cultural frame to which it essentially belongs. The novel is steeped in history though not explicitly but provides a substantial account of then existing conditions of work and relationships. The novel is set within the ambit of post-Independence and the onset of green revolution in the rural Malwa region of Indian Punjab. In its depiction of the socio-cultural ethos of Punjab, *Flicker* offers itself for comparison with Dalip Kaur Tiwana's *Gone are the Rivers (Rivers)*. Both the novels are about Punjab and capture its society in a particular moment. Both are located in history and are realistic novels. But they focus on different sections of society which face different problems. Tiwana's cultural discourse is located twenty or thirty years before Gurdial Singh's. Her novel depicts a

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princely Sikh state of Punjab, Patiala and narrates the story about the aristocrats. Gurdial Singh in his novel has the narrative focus on the outcastes or the “margins,” who are economically exploited and culturally neglected sections of the Punjabi rural society rather than the socially dominant classes.

Society and culture, both are key terms in this analysis. The blending between the two can not be denied, but still they are two different concepts. Society has much more to do with structures. It refers to the broad grouping of people having common institutions, traditions, and collective activities and interests. While “culture” is a broader perspective, with generally more historical depth in sense of the time factor. It refers to the set of shared attitudes, social practices or conventions that characterizes an institution. The characteristic features of everyday existence shared by people in a place or time is also culture (“Culture and Society”). In fact, society and culture as Richard Jewell explains are together, “the sea of people and institutions all around us that we sometimes call our community.” Punjab is a Sikh majority state. Sikhism came to be dominated by the caste-class of Sikh *jat* landlords. Indera Paul Singh in his anthropological study of a Sikh village discovered that “most of the Sikh values are *Jat* values and *Jats* assert that they occupy the highest position among the Sikh castes” (qtd. in Puri 324). The societies based on castes are closed societies. Its membership is an “ascribed status,” rather than an “achieved status,” as in class based societies (Kornblum 235). The hereditary occupation is yet another feature of caste system, which we get to know through the characters in the novel. Nikka, the village barber according to custom handles important responsibility of delivering the marriage invitation to other villages or bringing in the cooking paraphernalia for weddings. Rode explains, “People of his caste had been doing this kind of errand for the village folk for centuries” (26). The 2010 publication specifies Raunaki, who stands by Jagseer till the end, as a jheor, a low caste engaged in carrying and supplying water to the village houses (61). His wife Santo runs the bhati, where she roasts popcorns. The son of Thola and Nandi, Jagseer is a low caste sharecropper and also the protagonist of the novel, through whose tragedy the ugly aspect of the caste system is depicted. All these people with their families live in mud huts built in *wehra*, “the ghetto of village outcastes” (12). The caste system imposes spatial segregation on castes. Consequently, while Dharam Singh who is a *jat* landlord lives with his family in the village and the poor outcastes are made to live on the outskirts of the village which is not in any case better than “cluster of dog pens” (59).

The novel portrays the tragedy and inevitability of the slow but certain process of transformation of feudal social system to a capitalist order. The old collapsing system though based on inequality, still had some human elements in its relationships. The new emerging values are presented as being even more cruel and inhuman, with no scope for human sympathy and selfless understanding. With the onset of green revolution, the norms of capitalist society as the axis of its development strategy, reflect themselves in the character of Bhanta. According to Robert Redfield, who pioneered anthropological research on peasantry, peasants were attached to land through bonds of sentiments and emotions. Agriculture, for them, was “a livelihood and a way of life, not a business for profit” (18). While Dharam Singh and his father being *Jat* landlords seem to hold on this attitude but not the next generation. Long ago, Dharam Singh’s father brought Thola to his village to work with him. He treated him not as a sharecropper but as his own brother and even gifts him half an acre land. After Thola’s death, Dharam Singh took sole responsibility of his son Jagseer and wife Nandi. Over the years, however, things began to change pointing towards the break-up of the feudal values and a replacement by selfish egotism and money mindedness. This process of change is presented as inevitable, though dehumanizing. So, while *Flicker* talks about collapsing human values for which there is romantic longing through Dharam Singh. *Rivers* focuses on the upper class feudalistic degenerating, valueless and collapsing society where the aristocrats being humbled find it difficult to sustain within the changing democratic times.

The changing social ethics and human relationships in the rural Punjab are portrayed in the form of Jagseer’s claim on nearly half an acre land and a *sheesham* tree growing on it. Jagseer and his mother have a special emotional attachment to this piece of land and the tree. As far as Dharam Singh was concerned, that piece of land was Jagseer’s. But when Bhanta, the eldest son of Dharam Singh assumes the control of the family affairs, things begin to change. The relationship between the two families becomes one of a landlord and the sharecropper. The *sheesham* and the *marhi* are totally unacceptable irritants for Bhanta. According to him, “How could a respectable farmer tolerate the tomb of one of his *seeries* in his field?” (21). The conflict reaches up to the hilt when Bhanta in connivance with his mother tricks Jagseer away from his field to meanwhile get the *sheesham* cut and after this in his *Jat* hauteur even taunts Jagseer, “There goes the landlord to look after his farms!” (84). Jagseer on the other hand, even after seeing the man responsible for his and his mother’s woes conceals his anger. The cutting of the *sheesham* which also sheltered the

tomb of Thola is the ultimate act of insult and humiliation of the dead soul who blindly served Dharam Singh's family all his life. This incidence also fastens Nandi's death and she dies of grief. This unjust social system humiliates, degrades and destroys even the most innocent individuals such that people like Jagseer and Raunaki find themselves no better than worms.

The economic backwardness too doesn't obscure the cultural richness and we come to know of the customs, rituals, food, dress, fauna and flora of the region. The birth, marriage and death are the three important occasions in life, of which we come across the culture-centric, various marriage and death rituals in the novel. While *jago*, *muklava* and veil-lifting ceremony put light on the marriage customs, the demise of Nikka's mother and Nandi makes aware of the *wains*, performing of the last rites and other death rituals in the rural Malwa region. In contrast to *Flicker*, *Rivers* presents marriage and death rituals on a totally different scale, with razzmatazz style as the aristocrats of Punjab are in focus.

We also come across another cultural and also economic marker, that is, the various food items in the novel, which may not be very lavish, as poor marginals are in focus. In fact, food items are the most sensitive and important expression of a culture which mark its identity. The chapattis and tea is their staple diet. This diet on special occasions enjoy the luxury of buttermilk and sweets like *ladoos* and *patassas*. The dried coconut kernels and jaggery is also one of the favourites. Drinks go along with both sad and happy occasions. According to Comrade Swaran Singh, in rural Punjab the home-made liquor is preferred which kinship groups brew on their own (qtd. in Puri 331). Gheela gives a bottle of it to Jagseer that kicks him to challenge Nikka for a fight.

A translated text is a cultural discourse in a different language. This paper explores *The Last Flicker* as a negotiated cultural discourse in English. The social issues discussed in the paper bring us close to the culture of the rural Malwa society as it is reflected in the intervention of the translator. The aim is to focus on the marginalities and the exploitation of the down trodden. In a way *Flicker* is a pessimistic discourse and appears to provide no solution to the problems of the socially and economically marginalized.

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16

Macbeth: The Play of Power and Politics

Iesha Sharma *

In a traditional republic a truly impressive individual leads a public and political life, and defines republican virtue through their actions. Virtuous men are honorable; virtue means a love and responsibility for their nation that overshadows all other aspects of their lives. In Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, King Duncan's character is the exemplar of republican virtue. He possesses a rigid set of republican principles. His decisions are based purely on his ideas of what is the best for his nation. He follows what he believes to be the most virtuous path. The character of King Duncan of Scotland is very favorable. He deeply appreciates the services of Macbeth and Banquo as any right thinking monarch would. He is simple minded and trustful and he is full of gratitude towards those who have served him well. King Duncan's gratitude does not end here, he would like to visit Macbeth's castle at Inverness in order to show his appreciation of Macbeth's deeds.

In Shakespeare's principle source, Holinshed's *Chronicles of Scottish History*, King Duncan is shown as a bad ruler who plotted against Macbeth, instead of rewarding his service. But Shakespeare makes King Duncan very saintly, and he is full of republican virtues because if Shakespeare had shown him as a bad ruler then his murder would not have given rise to the atmosphere of pity and sorrow. In a republican society, a good ruler is always respected and loved by his people and when he is murdered there is anger among his people and they want to take revenge, same thing happened in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. After the murder of King Duncan is revealed, Macbeth and Lady Macbeth becomes fearful because they knew very well if they are caught, all the nation would go against them and they will have to face their wrath. So, when Macduff cries "O horror! horror! horror!" the King has been murdered. Macbeth quickly kills the two guards ostensibly because they have obviously committed the murder, but really because he is afraid lest they should plead their innocence and thus create a complication for him. He justifies killing the guards on the plea that he could not endure to have such treacherous murderers alive. Macbeth even gives expression to a feeling of profound sorrow over the murder of Duncan and says that the world has become empty and life has become futile with the death of their King. Macbeth

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creates such a drama because he was very well aware of the fact that no one is going to appreciate the murder of King Duncan, because he was a good king. If King Duncan would have been a bad ruler, then everyone would have appreciated Macbeth's act. All the people of the nation would have called Macbeth a noble man who freed them all from the bad ruler because in a republican society there is no place for the bad ruler who practices tyranny.

Even in *Macbeth* during the starting of the play, there are republican virtues which are soon changed after the prophecies made by the witches. Before, Macbeth meets the witches we are acquainted with the military valour and heroism of Macbeth. King Duncan is informed that the victory has fallen to him mainly through the bravery of Macbeth whom they describe as 'Bellona's bridegroom'. Macbeth's heroism in war greatly raises him in our estimation even before we meet him. He is depicted as a true hero who is fighting for his nation and his men. But after his meeting with the witches, ambition arose in him to such an extent that he plans to murder the King. From here we can find 'evil' lurking in Macbeth's nature. *Holinshed Chronicles* portrayed Macbeth as good in the beginning. Holinshed had written about Macbeth that he began as a very good king, a welcome change from the corrupt reign of Duncan. For the first seven years Macbeth had ruled in peace with equal justice. He helped rid Scotland of robber barons who had flourished under Duncan. But then in last ten years of his reign, Macbeth became cruel and persecuted anyone he feared might oppose him in the future.

Macbeth is the play of power and politics, and all these things lead, Macbeth to go against the republican virtues which were earlier followed by him. But the root cause of the change in Macbeth's nature was his ambition. Ambition is usually understood in its straightforward sense as an eagerness to gain promotion and power, to rise in the world, as Duncan's general in the field, Macbeth might be expected to fit Bacon's conception in '*Of Ambition*': 'Good Commanders in the Warres, must be taken, be they never so Ambitious... And to take a soldier without Ambition is to pull off his Spurres'. But in *Macbeth* ambition is presented as a dangerous quality. It causes the downfall of both Macbeth and Lady Macbeth and triggers series of deaths in *Macbeth*. Ambition is the driving force of the play. His first and main ambition was to become King of Scotland and this ambition came in him after the fulfillment of the first prophecy of the witches. He became so ambitious that he murdered King Duncan in order to become King himself and after that he did not look

back and killed all those who came in his way. According to John Russell Brown, “For Macbeth the murder of Duncan was the equivalent in mountaineering terms of scaling Everest, and after this he has no trouble with lower hills;...” (18).

Macbeth is not fully to blame for his ambition as Lady Macbeth has him kill Duncan so that she can be Queen; this ambition represents power. While Macbeth is to blame for all he has done to his country, his wife started a chain reaction that sent Macbeth down this dark path. Had Macbeth not told his wife about the prophecies, she would not have become so obsessed with power and she would not have sent her husband to kill King Duncan. Ambition can be both fair and foul. It becomes foul when it becomes so powerful that it destroys a person’s morality, as was the case with Macbeth and Lady Macbeth. Ambition can be fair when put to good uses, and when it is kept in check by one’s sense of right and wrong as in the case of Malcolm. Malcolm is good at heart and desires power only to use it for good; he also has an ambition to destroy Macbeth for killing his father.

Power goes hand in hand with ambition. Throughout reading of the play, Macbeth changes a lot from being a man of loyalty and honesty, to a man of power hunger and greed. This shows how the more power you get the more power you want; which in many cases, such as this one leads to destruction. Many choices that Macbeth made were influenced by the power that he had, and thus power began to take over him, this then lead to greed and destruction of not only for himself, but others as well.

In the beginning of the play, Macbeth is not in a position of authority yet still receives praise. Although he is not in place of power, he is truly content with his life. Macbeth is looked up to and admired for being so brave and courageous. In the beginning Macbeth comes off as a genuine man who is admired by many people. This is demonstrated by a member of Macbeth’s battalion who refers to Macbeth as “the great Macbeth”. This man is covered in blood and is hurt, yet he still speaks of how noble Macbeth is. He says,

For brave Macbeth—well he deserves that name—
Disdaining fortune, with his brandish’d steel,
Which smoked with bloody execution,
Like valour’s minion craved out his passage. *I.II.16-19*

King Duncan is so pleased by him that he decides to give Macbeth the power of being Thane of Cawdor; by doing so he did not know what

this decision was going to lead to in the future. The King gave him this power because he saw how fine a man he was and thought that he would do a good job leading Cawdor with the power that has been given to him. But little did the King know that this taste of power would bring out new dangerous qualities in Macbeth. Once Macbeth possessed the power of being Thane of Cawdor, he began to exhibit more greed. He has just been given such a huge responsibility and once he was given new power, he craved more; especially when he stumbled upon the witches.

Power, however, what Macbeth inadvertently achieves, and because he did not particularly seek it and does not understand it, he wields it unskillfully. It was a false move on his part to kill King Duncan; the murder of Banquo and Fleance is botched, the killing of Macduff’s wife and children is politically unnecessary, gratuitous and counterproductive. Above all, it was a careless exercise of power to let Malcolm to escape to England. Macbeth’s casual and ineffective acts of violence, his lack of planning, all stem from his inability to comprehend the nature of the power which inevitably fell upon him as a result of the act of regicide. He did not understand it because he did not particularly seek it.

The historical aspects of Macbeth, also somehow represent the republican virtues. *Macbeth* was actually written as a tribute to Shakespeare’s royal patron, King James I of England who was James VI of Scotland before he succeeded to the English throne. Of all of his plays, this is a powerful suspense thriller. The background also reveals the fascinating way Shakespeare used and twisted history to make a better play and to address the political agenda of King James. It also shows some of the things going on at that time in English society and politics. *Macbeth* is openly a political play. It is also considered as a history play based on the events in the life of a real historical figure. Shakespeare pays tribute to James, and also supports James’ political agenda. England and Scotland had been historic enemies, but now they were governed by the same monarch, and he wanted to unite them into a single kingdom. In several plays written before 1603, Shakespeare used the Scots as convenient ethnic targets. After 1603 it became politically incorrect to take potshots at the Scots. Although James and the other Stuarts wanted a United Kingdom, it would take over 100 years for England and Scotland to merge into a single political entity. To advance the King’s agenda, Shakespeare wrote the play in a certain way. He created and emphasized commonality between the two kingdoms. In Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, the relationship between England and Scotland has been shown in very cordial terms. Shakespeare

tried his best to show the relationship between the two nations in a very good way so that the political agenda of uniting both England and Scotland can be fulfilled. In *Macbeth*, when King Duncan is murdered, Malcolm escapes to England and there he is welcomed by the King of England. King of England also helps Malcolm in taking revenge from Macbeth by sending English forces to invade Scotland and free the nation from the tyranny of Macbeth and restore the crown to Malcolm.

From the very day Macbeth becomes the King, after killing King Duncan, he proves to be a ruthless dictator and a cruel murderer.

Macbeth now has become an utterly unscrupulous dictator and tyrant, which is totally against the republican virtues, in which King works for the welfare of his nation and his men. But Macbeth proved to be a dictator and dictatorship never lasts long because the dictator is always hated by his men and he never attains their love and respect. Thus with the death of Macbeth, comes the end of tyranny and justice prevails with the restoration of Malcolm on the throne.

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17

Parent-child Relationship In Anita Desai's *Voices in the City*

*Rajdevinder Kaur**

*Dr. Anand Swarup***

Parent-Child relationship occupies a significant place in familial relationships. It has become characteristic feature of Indian life and literature in all the ages. Its vitality distinguishes the Indian culture from the western culture. The Indian concept of parent child relationship lays a lot of emphasis on high ideals and noble conduct among the Indian children. Stress on inculcating virtues in the young minds and the idea of love for the younger and respect for the elders have become the hall-mark of the Indian culture. Good always gains victory over evil, selfishness has to give way to altruism and egoistic, good attitude has to be adopted for the welfare of the society. Indian literature is full of teachings and moral values which are to be adopted for raising individual and social standard. Literary writings leave indelible impression upon society. Environment exercises greater influence over the minds of growing children. Environment of society in general and home in particular should be conducive, healthy and wholesome for the betterment of the parent-child relationship. Indian writers in English have tried to follow, as far as possible, the Indian traditions and conventions while depicting this social bond but they cannot escape from the general influences of their age either negative or positive. Modern age is the age of progress and prosperity. It is the age of science, industry and technology. As a result old values and customs are losing their grip and are being questioned by the growing children. Modern generation in India has been influenced by the western style of living and the impact of socio-political thought of the west on the Indian writers is immense. That is why the attitude of the English writers in India has undergone a change. They are acutely conscious of socio-economic changes of their age. While delineating the social reality, a writer has to make his composition artistically moving and aesthetically satisfying.

In the novels of Anita Desai parent-child relationship occupies a significant place and lack of communication, insecurity, loneliness, neglect and isolation are some of its characteristics. Change in outlook and the

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social demands of the present age have greatly influenced it. If the feeling of nostalgia for the traditional mode of life and cultural values is missing in her novels, it is not because there is any deliberate debunking either. It is the feature of a mature and rational novelist to be objective in his attitude and be free from prejudices and bias. Anita Desai does not comment directly on any situation or character. Her readers often feel that she makes sincere efforts to find positive human values. She is performing her duty to be faithful to the society by depicting certain bitter and discomfiting facets of the contemporary social scenario. Environment, surroundings, circumstances and situations contribute a lot to the development of parent-child relationship in her novels.

Parent-child relationship has been presented in a detailed and elaborate manner in her second novel *Voices in the City*. The novel studies the relationship of Nirode, Monisha and Amla with their parents. Their mother and the children themselves are the products of the same social ethos and are the victims of the same kind of pressures. They lead a very miserable and alienated life against the back ground of the monster city of Calcutta. They all fall victim to their misfortunes, unmitigated by any sense of human relationship. Mrs. Desai has tried to probe deeply into the inner recesses of her characters' consciousness and parent-child relationship has been dealt with great depth, understanding, insight and knowledge. Mother-son relationship occupies a prominent place in the novel. The mother and her children suffer from alienation and loneliness. Nirode, the son, being a rootless nihilist, a psychic outlaw, has been presented as an eccentric and inconsistent figure. Perhaps the reason for his eccentricity lies in the fact that his parents do not enjoy a harmonious and healthy relationship. The psychic state of the children can be well imagined who are born out of such type of wedlock. His father, who was earlier a caring sort of parent, turns into a drunkard, adulterate and dishonorable man. His transformation plays havoc with the personality of the mother and she, from a sweet, sensitive and consummate beauty, has turned into a cold, practical and occupied woman who does not seem to have human heart and delicacy even for her own children. There is contempt and resentment in the mother's eyes whereas malice is obvious in the behaviour of the father. The home has become a kind of private hell more dire than Dante's purgatory. Nirode's sensitiveness, touchiness and irritating nature prove to be his drawbacks and expose him to all the dangers outside. The illicit relationship of his mother with Major Chaddha not only degrades her in the eyes of her children but also creates a wall between them. Aloneness alone remains the natural condition for her children and

life seems to be a jigsaw puzzle for them. The mother signifies Goddess Kali and Nirode feels overwhelmed by her grace and dignity as well as her supremely self-confident detachment. Being a rootless nihilist, he has no philosophy, no doctrine, no creed or religion to be dependent upon. He is a psychic outlaw who can not relate himself to the world because he has no shared community of values. His sensitiveness makes him conscious of his self-respect and he prefers to put up with suffering poverty and misery. His self-respect breeds self reliance which ultimately makes him independent of his mother and the world. His mother assumes the shape of Kali in the mind of her children. Kali is the creator, preserver and destroyer. Similar is his concept of his mother who pleased to see him breath and live. He says;

"I know my mother. I am living at last. I know now where I am going towards her, towards her. She is waiting, can't you see?"¹

(Anita Desai, *Voices In The City*, New Delhi: Orient Paperbacks, 1965, p.42)

Finally he has to get reconciled to his mother who has become Shakti, Kali. Amla's apathy, Monisha's suicide and Arun's marriage to the British nurse compel alienation to take place between the mother and the children. Their mother makes up her mind to be aloof but alert in regard to her children's movement and behavior. She is not sentimental about her relationship with her children. Monisha becomes a miserable woman and to a larger extent, the parental influence plays a vital role to make her pensive, gloomy and pessimistic. As a girl she is simple, silent, beautiful, sensitive and mildly self-centered girl who turns into an insane and sterile woman after her marriage. Her marriage cannot cure her psychological pressure and morbidity. The loveless wedlock between her parents becomes a cause of her mental sickness. Her marriage further aggravates her psychological malady and she puts an end to her miserable existence by committing suicide. Amla is different from Monisha and Nirode. She wants to enjoy the pleasures of life. Her attitude towards life is indicative of her inner strength. She is aware that her parents has different attitude to life. Her father is a cynic while her mother is a worldly wise and practical lady. The mutual discords of her parents, disharmony in the family and the non-co-operative attitude of the father disturb her but can not affect her to the extent they have affected Nirode and Monisha. Her mother, self-centered and sensually self-absorbed, makes a confession in her letter to Amla. "It is my fault for not having kept on the Calcutta house and

kept you all with me, for having sold it and come to live alone in this secluded paradise which seems to have no channel of communication with your real and rough lives in the city, away from me". 2

(Anita Desai. *Voices In The City*, New Delhi: Orient Paperbacks, 1965, pp.201-202)

The mutual behavior and action of parents and children determine the type of relationship which is created between them. In *Voices in the City*, Anita Desai has portrayed the avoidant type of relationship between the parents and their children. This relationship is not based on security and there is marked distance between them. Monisha, Amla and Nirode do not enjoy a happy, healthy and secure childhood. They have learnt to take care of themselves as they do not expect any kind of co-operation of their parents. There is bitterness in the hearts of children for their parents and they become to independent. The failure of the parents to build strong emotional ties with their children is responsible for exposing them to all sorts of dangers in the outside world. Their mother removes herself away from her children and leaves them alone and alienated. So the novel is detailed and elaborate analysis of parent-child relationship.

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18

An Analytical Study of Theatrical Adaptation by Director Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry of Girish Karnad's *Naga-Mandala*

Sunman Kaur *

Any event that involves the interplay of time, space, action, performers and spectators is understood to carry the possibilities of theatre. Indeed historians, archaeologists and anthropologists argue that evidence of performance - that may be taken to represent forms of drama or theatre - occurs among all the people and cultures of the world and can be traced back as far as human knowledge goes. According to Richard Schechner, ". . . dancing, singing, wearing masks and/or costumes, impersonating other humans, animals or supernatural, acting out stories . . . are coexistent with the human nature" (11).

Thus performance in any form is, what the term 'theatre' stands for. Talking about theatrical adaptation, while referring to T.S Eliot's axiom that all the forms of art are derived from other arts, L. Hutcheon suggests, "adaptation joins imitation, allusion, parody, travesty, pastiche and quotation, as popular creative ways of deriving art from art" (108). At an informal meeting of writers organized by the Australian Writers' Guild in 1985, British playwright David Hare, while replying to a question about the source of ideas, says, "good writers borrow, great writers steal" (Hutcheon 62), which implies that even the great writers project already existing ideas as their original contribution.

Throughout history and even with today's copyright laws, stories that resonate tend to find new modes of expression. These days the adaptations of literary text into different mediums has emerged as an individual genre in academics. In this article an attempt has been made to analyse Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry's theatrical adaptation of Girish Karnad's play *Naga-Mandala*. Replete with myths and motifs, the play *Naga-Mandala* by Girish Karnad revolves around the tale of Rani who is treated as a dumb person with neither voice nor choice by her father and her husband. Rani is one of those typical wives who wants to win her husband's affection at any cost and as suggested by an old lady Kurudavva, the aid comes from a magical love root which she mixes in the milk. As a result the milk turns red and so Rani, in fear, spills the milk on a nearby

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anthill where *Naga*, the King Cobra drinks it and falls in love with her. *Naga*, who can take the form of a human being, is enchanted by Rani and begins to visit her every night in the form of her husband. It consequently gives rise to the issue of Rani's chastity and finally her ultimate triumph over the situation.

The story not only exposes the ugliness of a society where woman is considered "second sex", "other", "object", "non-man" but also where women are taught in the process of being socialized, to internalize the reigning patriarchal ideology e.g., male superiority; and so conditioned to derogate their own sex as well as to cooperate in their own subordination. Patriarchal dominance has prevented women from realizing their productive and creative potentialities. The play also suggests remedial measures and condemns the orthodox society by an act of reconciliation between Rani and *Naga*.

Naga-Mandala received its Punjabi theatrical adaptation in the hands of one of the most successful female directors of post-1980 period in Punjab, Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry who has started a new era of Punjabi theatre. Neelam Mansingh's new theatrical techniques have made a spectacular departure from the pre-existing literary norms and concerns. "Basically my premise", Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry comments, "was to take the world's classics- regionalize the national and nationalize the regional - because I feel that you cannot be truly contemporary unless you know your own roots" (qtd. in Dharwadekar 281). The adaptation of Karnad's play *Naga-Mandala* (1988), Lorca's *Yerma*, Racine's *Phaedra* as *Fida* (1997) and Jean Giraudoux's *The Mad Woman of Chailot* as *Shahar mere di Pagal aurat* (1995) and the representation of life of ancient poet Bhartrihari as *Raja Bharatrihari* (1997) are the names of some popular plays out of the long list of stage productions by Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry. She develops stage-scripts from fictional materials but most of her sources tend to be non-Indian.

Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry staged *Naga-Mandala* in Punjabi for the first time in Shankara Theatre Festival in Bangalore on November 13, 1987. It was a successful performance but she comments, "As I belong to Amritsar, I went there to stage a production but learnt later they hadn't expected me to do a play in Punjabi" (Rajwade 6). Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry has never allowed herself to be discouraged by the fact that Punjabi was considered infra dig in Punjab. Though *Naga-Mandala* was Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry's first major work but for the first time, speech, narration, recitation, songs, dances, costumes, props, movements,

all stood unified. In this creation, she did not just direct the play; she recreated it- a recreation that earned full approval from the playwright. "You are the only person who has really understood my play" (Dharwadker 122), commented Girish Karnad after the performance.

It was Arundhati Nag who requested Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry to revive *Naga-Mandala* for a playwrights' festival in Bangalore. She was a bit apprehensive about the idea as she wasn't sure if the play would still speak to her like it did several years ago. But surprisingly it did. Although the music and some of the actors in the play remained the same, but mostly it was recast. She brought in a new expression to the play and staged it very differently. Finally, *Naga-Mandala* was performed in *Desh Parva* festival held at Sangeet Natak Akademi on 9th October 2010.

When Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry directed the play *Naga-Mandala* in Punjabi with the script written by Punjabi poet Surjit Patar for her group "Company" in Chandigarh, the change in the title of the play as "*Naga Chayya*" hinted at the change of focus (9 March, 1991 Rabindra Sadan, Calcutta). Ananda Lal writes,

Actually she chose to misinterpret the text by making the husband 'transform' into *Naga* (Director's Note distributed at the performance). However, the idea in Karnad's text is not that the snake-lover and Appanna symbolize two faces of husbandly duty, but that the *Naga* represents the wife's wish- fulfilment as well as divine intervention. (Benson 87)

In many ways the script of *Naga Chayya* is an intertextual musical playground of multiple source texts where a number of "political" and "popular" conventions from the theatre are freely employed or referenced. *Naga Chayya* uses popular and familiar theatre conventions such as live music, physicality and magic realism. Nevertheless, substantially in the surrealist setting and with the strong thematic thought, *Naga Chayya* depicts the hollowness and defeat of male chauvinism and eventual triumph of the honor of the female inner strength as shown in *Naga-Mandala*.

In *Naga Chayya*, Surjit Patar has rightfully articulated the agony of Rani's heart through the usage of his lyrical poetry. The starting description when the character of Rani is introduced is in the form of a *boli*. When the story introduces Rani, a style called *baint* (form of Heer) is used.

fJZe ;h e[Vh itkB ijkB b'e', T[jdk Gbk fijk j? ;h Bkw e'Jh,
;jB w'jB oZy', feðB fpðB oZy', ihs whs oZy', okw fônkw oZy',

Rani is described as a young beautiful girl whose parents are finding a suitable match for her. Next, Surjit Patar has used another *Heer* to describe

the pain and grief of a newly wedded girl who holds her parents responsible for her miserable state. Her anklets are compared to prison chains, her bangles to handcuffs and her house to a prison. According to Surjit Patar, lonely in her house, Rani recalls her father and mother by using painful *vain* and *ahlaniya*. There are typical tunes for sad dirges which include slow dragging chants punctuated by shrill and wailing cries. In the translated script, Patar incorporates his lyrical excerpts to the height of his creative potential. Every fiber in the script is attuned to the symphony that emanates from the interplay of emotions. For him it is not the word that matters but its tone and tenor that imparts it, a unique identity. In his hands, words become pliable and the overall effect is that of ecstatic feelings, subliminal undertones and the Keatsian “teasing us out of thought as doth eternity” (Surjit Singh 268). He loves words for their sounds but their meanings he understands in the stillness of his mind.

Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry is known for using fire, smoke, water, oil and food, things that other directors would find too messy on stage. To make her plays come alive, she blends these with carefully - chosen symbolic props, to manifest a psychological state. For instance, in the later part of the play Rani steps into a huge pond on the stage and splashes water with her foot, the action expressing the turmoil in her mind. In *Naga Chayya* there is a live kitchen where Rani spends most of her time, cooks food for Appanna and considers it as a place of retreat for her in her misery. In the beginning of the play the artists performing as Flames are seen enjoying noodles, drinking tea and talking casually. Further, Bishni also carries small tiffin in which she initially carries her mid day meal of a *chappati* and later she gives Rani the magical roots from this Tiffin. All these are extra dialogic symbols created by Neelam Maansingh Chowdhry.

Naga Chayya was cast before it was written. The casting decisions were made on the quality and range of the actors' singing voices, on their flexibility in being able to play a number of roles and their adaptability in working with a new script. All the major actors, Vansh Bhardwaj, Ramanjit kaur and Payal bring to their performance a reputation as Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry's actors - whose repertoires, performance style and public identity link them firmly to her theatre. In Ramanjit and Payal's performance of Rani, the link between the dramatist and actor is further strengthened by the fact that the play is written for Rani to describe a woman's turmoil. The prefatory statements given by the Story set up audience expectations for the coming narration. This type of 'audience foreknowledge, as Dyer terms it, encodes viewer / spectator expectations.

While preparing for *Naga Chayya* the rehearsal process starts by doing a series of improvisations in the play but without the text. The entire exercise was to nudge the actors into taking risk, sloughing of fixed approaches and pushing them into developing their own acting vocabulary. During the rehearsal period of her second performance Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry felt that just as the character of the husband is split into two- the brutal husband during the day and metamorphosing into a divine lover at night, she wanted to give a similar metaphysical layering to the character of Rani. She did this by not *marking* the actors by the character they are playing; -the writer becomes the husband who becomes the Naga. The story becomes the beautiful women, who then become the wife played by two artists. This constant shifting of the character was an attempt to plumb the complex and dense ideas of the play.

Gestures are complimentary to the beauty of the play and they mostly come as an important ingredient in the whole scenario of an artist's performance. Gestures are part of an artist's superior skill which is mostly absent in the written text. Referring to gestures in *Naga Chayya*, the play begins with the Author in the temple; who is seen walking with a torch in his hand, then he lights a fire and sits in front of it. In his attempt to stay awake he is seen running and jumping on the stage and while describing his problematic situation to the audience, he folds his hands as if praying to God. Further he even takes off his clothes and sits in the tub of water to stay active. While seeing the Flames arriving he hides in one corner of the stage. The gestures of Vansh Bhardwaj in the character of the Author are admirable. In some instances, they add a bit of humor to an otherwise serious story. For example when the story appears on the stage as a female, he with excitement picks her up which creates a few giggles in the audience. As Appanna, Vansh Bhardwaj is shown aggressive, feisty and violent in his behavior. Vansh Bhardwaj plays the part of the Author, then the Appanna and then the Naga lover.

The image of the young and beautiful Rani is portrayed more effectively by sets of body and facial expressions, which foreground her elegant walk, long black tresses and young age. Both Ramanjit and Payal aptly perform their parts with ample devotion. The scene where Ramanjit as Rani gets scared when she sees Appanna at night and jumps into the trunk is humorous. But within seconds the scene where the Naga transformed into Appanna tries to seduce Rani is romantic and breathtaking. Actors Vansh Bhardwaj and Ramanjit perform passionately and some physical lifts are also added to the love scene. The scene when artist Payal

enters the little make-believe lotus pond on the stage, which symbolizes Rani's entering into the world of love and passion, is beautiful. In the end, Rani proves her innocence by holding the Naga and eventually everyone chants her name as Goddess and picks her up in a basket on their head. Ramanjit as Rani has her hair open and wears a red *tilak* on her head, her appearance looks exactly like a Goddess incarnate. The entire scene is well performed.

Rani's emancipation is also signified by the tonal differences in her vocal deliverance: from a submissive and meek voice of Rani changing into a firm, strong and confident voice after her conversion into a Goddess. The speaking voice of Rani and Appanna from beginning of the story till its culmination alters completely and suggests that performance offers a set of auditive signs generated by the actor which establishes speaker-listener/ listener-speaker interchange.

The live music provided by Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry in her work gives the performance its unique style. The shift in her stance has everything to do with the demise of the legendary B.V. Karanth who enriched all her productions with 'earthy strains'. "Now that he is no more, I cannot get myself to indulge heavily in music" (Jangveer Singh 12), says the director. In its final form, the play has what can be called "functional" music which leads the script forward rather than carving a zone of its own. As for production, the play has been superbly structured with a familiar cast which offers Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry the comfort level she demands as the director.

With such a powerful theatrical display one can conclude without hesitation that *Naga-Mandala* is considered to be one of the Girish Karnad's masterpieces and Neelam Mansingh Chowdhry's *Naga Chayya* is regarded as the best theatrical production of the play.

Authored by Sunman Kaur

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19

Multiculturalism in *Mistaken Identity**Dr. Anupam Chakrabarti ***Archana Sharma***

The narrative of *Mistaken Identity* is woven round two landmark events of Indian political history ——— both events of the Gandhian era, the Khilafat Movement and the Dandi Salt Movement and the political repercussions thereof. If *Rich Like Us* is replete with details of various kinds: autobiographical facts, the rich/poor divide, political turmoil with the proclamation of Emergency, the evils in the bureaucratic system, colonial and post-colonial perspectives and globalization, *Mistaken Identity* has very little to do with such details. What accounts for the fictional appeal of the novel is Nayantara Sahgal's uncanny ability to weave elements of fantasy around socio-political events.

The narrative revolves round two martyrs of love, the principal character, Bhusan and his mother, the queen of Vijaygarh and their separate romantic love affairs. The multicultural element is reinforced in the plot itself. The Hindu, Bhusan takes a Muslim girl as his first love; unfortunately Bhusan is not able to marry her. His mother, the Rajput queen of Vijaygarh falls in love with a Muslim comrade and gets married to him, who becomes her second husband. If this plot line is viewed properly, the real elements appear to be eclipsed by the fantastic elements. Jasbir Jain in an interview with Nayantara Sahgal asked her the seminal question, "Would you say this can happen in real circumstances in India today?" Sahgal's quick rejoinder was "It is highly unlikely. Today it might happen, but not in 1929-1930". (*Establishing Connections: Interview with Nayantara Sahgal* 175)

When the book opens, Bhusan is shown talking to his neighbour in a hotel in Bombay. His neighbour however, is not an Indian but a Turk who appraises him of the revolutionary social changes sweeping across the whole of Turkey. From his neighbour Bhusan learns that Muslim women in Turkey have done away with the burqa and now they saunter freely across the streets without the veil. The news comes as a welcome relief to the love-lorn Bhusan whose thoughts about Razia are uppermost in his mind. He is ignorant of the harsh reality of Razia's marrying a Muslim member of the Turkish delegation and her leaving India for good.

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Sahgal's multiculturalism is evident in the great concern he shows for the communal relationship between the Muslim and the Hindu residents of India. Bhusan, the protagonist, is opposed to certain sections of the populace (Hindus and Muslims included) who favour the idea of Hindu-Muslim amity, but cannot conceive the idea of a Hindu-Muslim marriage. So, the so called followers of multiculturalism who gloat over the principles of multiculturalism become indifferent to the question of Hindu-Muslim marriage. Such a show of multiculturalism, in the opinion of Sahgal, is apparent multiculturalism and not real: *By unity they mean their trumped-up unities, public emotions gushed on like taps, then each to his lair until it's time to tear each other to pieces again.* (*Mistaken Identity* 44)

The point of view with which the novel begins is that of the protagonist of the novel. At the very outset of the novel he is presented in terms of a familiar "persona". The novelist presents him as a stereotype of the affluent cosmopolitan tourist whose identity (Indian or individual) is curiously hidden in his membership. It is amusing that his membership in the society can be traced in the faceless circle of persons similarly anonymous. As he goes on defining his identity for himself with the progress of the novel, his name gets dropped. He gets involved with a host of persons who are gradually differentiated from him and identified in terms of race, religion, nationality and relationships. The novel can best be regarded as an exposure of mistaken identities. The novel deals not only with the protagonist's misunderstanding about others but also with the misunderstanding about himself which is a sequel of his identification with different varieties of 'personae' or masks.

The reader inhales the aroma of multiculturalism from the cosmopolitan setting which the novelist creates in the opening pages of the novel. The reader keeps on wondering whether the ships, harbours, hotels, Bombay, Bhusan's beloved Sylla and Lady Daruwala have any identity or not. Even a cursory reader infers that this cosmopolitan setting has very little to do with India. There is both anonymity within and anonymity without. The anonymity of the cosmopolitan world squares with the anonymity in the mind of Bhusan whose mind races through names such as Sir Jamshedji Tata, Mussolini, Shah Riza Pahlevi and Kemal Pasha.

Bhusan's romantic leanings towards Razia, is the first step in his understanding the difference between the mistaken identity and real identity. Sahgal's vision of life is that the discovery of the real identity is genuine experience, an experience worthy to be cherished: *I had a vocation. It was this. She and I were so intimately connected that when she stopped*

appearing in the window I felt I had been cut off at a vital artery.” (*Mistaken Identity* 62) Sahgal’s inclination towards the establishment of a multicultural society can be seen in the great concern she shows for the communal relationship between the Hindus and the Muslims in India. Though charges of insurgency are levelled against the Muslims yet Bhusan equates politics with religion in his searching questions to the lawyer, Nauzee Vacha: *Isn’t politics the same as religion in this country? And aren’t I up to my ears in religious intrigue? Does the court know, for example that I was responsible ——— solely ——— for instigating a Hindu-Muslim riot in Vijaygarh in 1917, and another in 1918, the two most barbaric religious riots in forty years?* (*Mistaken Identity* 178) Sahgal gives an eye-opening account of the communal riot in which all the principles of multiculturalism are thrown to the winds (*Mistaken Identity* 70-71)

Opposing this Hindu-Muslim communalism are Bhusan and Razia, the two of them constituting a representative Indian presence. The two of them provide “mute evidence” that cultures, like sexes, can grow up unmet and unmixed.” In a function arranged by Sylla for collecting funds for Khilafat Movement, Bhusan reads out his poem, “The Bridge and then makes a vehement oration against Hindu-Muslim communalism. In an exuberant mood Bhusan exclaims, “I am you, there is no other way;” nothing celebrates better” the matchless mix of her culture and mine... fatally, finally wedded... Fate meant the two of us for love, not war or separation. It meant us to roast our dogmas in the same bonfire.” (*Mistaken Identity* 146-147) In a mood of prayer and meditation he reads the entire poem and then makes a challenging assertion of his multicultural identity: *I challenged them to extricate my Hindu from my Muslim self, if they could. And then I gave a clarion call for Hindu-Muslim marriage. Sexual unity was the acid test of unity, I said* (*Mistaken Identity* 147)

In making Bhusan search for his true identity, Sahgal allows him to keep the values of multiculturalism alive, be it in his relations with Razia or Sylla. Bhusan’s relations with Razia and Sylla stand out symbolically in terms of Hinduism, Islam and Zoroastrianism. Sylla cannot understand that Bhusan has “*opened and closed and lived and died over and over again*” (*Mistaken Identity* 150) round his lost love, that “*loving might be a vocation like medicine or the priesthood, that the worshipper in all of us must have the last word.*” (*Mistaken Identity* 150) Sahgal underscores the multicultural elements inherent in the two great religions of Asia: Hinduism of India and the Sufism of Persia. Worship and love are inextricably unified both in Hindu devotional poetry and the poetry of the Sufis of Persia.

Sahgal weaves a multicultural world by making the readers familiar with the multicultural society of Sylla: Sylla had a penchant for histrionics and the tableaux that she composed for a party at her grandmother’s house evinced her cultural leanings. Sylla had culled out a scene from Sarojini Naidu’s rhyming poems in which the reference to Lord Krishna and his milkmaids dancing to the tune of the Eternal Flute Player was limpidly clear. Sylla gave a multicultural setting to the scene by using an Italianate temple as a backdrop.

Bhusan had been sent to the United States for his education. There he came into contact with Willie-May. He had the chance to imbibe the finer points of multiculturalism in that multicultural country, but he failed to do so. Bhusan and Razia were held together by the contraries of Indian history and tradition. They were curiously bound into the identity of composite Indian culture. Such was not the case of his relation with Willie-May. Bhusan’s relationship with Willie-May is purely sexual. In her company, she is exposed to the multicultural society of America. Willie-May teaches him to drink cocktails out of a teacup during Prohibition in the US and to do the Bunny Hug, the Turkey Trot and all the fashionable ballroom dances. These superficial things do not have a lasting hold on his mind and his relationship with Willie does not square with that of Sylla in which he finds tenderness and concern.

Sahgal portrays a world of social freedom. In such a world of social freedom, the multicultural elements can be found to a great extent. In such a world an individual can live a life of genuine fulfillment and achieve a true union of political and religious convictions. Sahgal seems to have the notion of a multicultural society when she thinks of the union of political and religious convictions. Sahgal accomplishes this through the separate cases of the *ranee* of Vijaygarh and her thirty two year old son, Bhusan. By bringing about radical social changes in man-woman relationship, both the *ranee* and her son, would help in the ushering of a multicultural society.

Sahgal gives an artistic expression to her firm faith in gender equality. In an interview to V.Mohini of *The Literary Criterion* she makes this thing pointedly clear: “*It is a battle between those who believe in an equal society and those who don’t. Definitely it is becoming a more permissive society and I am all for it.*” (“Writer at Work” Interview by V.Mohini, *The Literary Criterion* 64-65). If we examine the observation of Sahgal carefully, we see that it tantamounts to her plea for a multicultural society.

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20

Themes In White's Novel The Vivisector

Dr. Anupam Chakrabarti*

Anjali Ahlawat**

The Vivisector, as clearly as any of White's previous works, is a quest novel. Hurtle Duffield, the protagonist of the novel works on the same tortuous route taken by Oliver Halliday, Theodora Goodman, Stan Parker, Voss, the four Riders and Arthur Brown: The long desert track towards the Promised land. It expresses the theme of suffering and redemption. The novel's title suggests its controlling image of art as vivisection. For White, Art is a mystical body, the artist is a priest in the service of art and the work a ritual and the revelation of one's acceptance of the artistic credo.

The quest then is common, to all men, but gradually intensified in the artist. Hurtle Duffield, the protagonist of the novel, hopes that his art "might eventually suggest... Why not? the soul itself: for which the most skeptical carcasses of human flesh longed in secret. (*The Vivisector* 519) His art is an avenue to the realization of the "Divine Vivisector" (*The Vivisector* 259) God, and both successive women in his life and his paintings represents stages in his quest for perception of pure being. There is, then a circular movement in their relationship.

Life cycle itself has a circular movement. Life is born; it grows, matures, decays and dies and then springs again, so that death is also the beginning of new growth. *The Vivisector* traces the life of a painter from the age of six to his death. Hurtle Duffield, son of a garbage merchant and a washerwoman, is obsessed by drawings. As a child, he draws in the dust of the yard, on the walls of the house, and looks within. He reads the *Bible* to understand the significance of the blood of Christ and at the same time reads it to comprehend the meaning of thunder. His parents find him an unusual child and treat him in a particular manner. Hurtle visits the Courtneys where his mother works. He is fascinated by the chandelier at the house of the Courtneys:

Hurtle's evolution as an artist is linked with his contact with four women, suggesting wholeness. The women include Nance Lighfoot, a warm-hearted Sydney prostitute; Boo Hollingrake, Hurtle's lady-love; Hero

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Pavloussi, the lustful wife of respectable Greek ship-owner and Kathy Volkov whom Duffield regards as his spiritual child. All are related to Duffield through a semi-mystical vortex of sex and their response to his art. Bjorksten points out that Hurtle's canvases "remain eternal reminders of the stations he passed through in his life-their titles reflect his development through the four archetypal stages – he is seeking (by way of his mistresses) to attain those explanations which confront him." (*A General Introduction* 96)

Hurtle withdraws from life and society. He lives on a tract of deserted land with the rather brutal name of Ghash. Renunciation from the world of matter is absolutely indispensable for an artist. He looks for truth in everything. He distorts appearance to arrive at the truth. Nance accuses him of being "a kind of perv-perving on people even on bloody rocks!" (*Intellectual Traditions in Sydney and Melbourne* 224) Hurtle draws the series of rock paintings to "dissect on his drawing-board down to the core, the nerves of matter, but pure truth, the crystal eye, avoided him." (*Intellectual Traditions in Sydney and Melbourne* 221)

Hurtle is introduced to Hero at the dinner party of Olivia who has a lesbian relationship with Hero Pavloussi. Olivia gives Hero to Hurtle. But the happiest surprise she springs at Hurtle is the image of the crystal bird in the centre of the dining – table. The bird sees contemplating flight in the direction of Hero who sits immediately towards Hero, his "Spiritual bride" (*The Vivisector* 319) and "pure soul." (*The Vivisector* 325) As they reach the end of meal, the light falls on to the shimmers of underwater jewels and the bird seems floating on motionless wings." (*The Vivisector* 321) Hero appears to Hurtle as "being in flight." (*The Vivisector* 323) He falls in love with Hero though not in the usual sense of wanting to sleep with her.

Having passed through a kind of psychic hell and death, Hero and Hurtle embark on a pilgrimage to Perialos, the Greek island where Hero had found a temporary spiritual peace soon after her marriage. Hurtle plays the "role of stand-in groom." (*The Vivisector* 389) The trip is described as "their union through atonement." (*The Vivisector* 381) and Hero is Hurtle's "Hushed bride and fellow neophyte" (*Patricia Morley* 378) There us then, a circular movement in their relationship, despite the failure of Hurtle's original idea of the pure soul. The island pilgrimage sharpens the paradox which underlines the whole novel, the glory and horror of man's Dreck condition. Patricia Morley points out: "In Jewish and Christian mysticism the spiritual bridegroom's marriage signifies man's union with

God." (*Patricia Morley* 378) Their journey culminates in an empty chapel of St. John of the Apocalypse with mound of human excrement beside the altar, Hero is disillusioned and bursts out: "Are we, Do we come all this way for-nothing?" (*Patrick White*) Coming down the steps of the chapel, she hopelessly blubbers, "think we have lost our faith in God because we cannot respect men. They are so disgusting." (*The Vivisector* 389) Hero thinks herself foolish to believe in the possibility of regeneration. Hurtle feels sympathetic towards her state of mind.

For him, God represents the possibility of unity and he tries to bring together in art, from life, a unity of all the irreconcilable things. Hurtle is aware of the possibilities beyond himself. He perceives the redemptive beauty of a little golden hen pecking at the crumbs. He remembers the blue sea "Coiling and uncoiling... in its ritual celebration of renewal." (*The Vivisector* 406) Hurtle shares Hero's concerns but not her disillusionment. Unfortunately, he finds himself incapable of expressing in words his intuition of hope. The sea symbolizes life renewed. The golden hen, who "flashed her wings: not in flight; remained consecrated to this earth even while scurrying through illuminated dust" (*The Vivisector* 393) is a "revelation of light" (*Thelma Herring and G.A. Wilkes* 142) Hurtle understands that Dreck can be "illuminated" and that beauty coexists with dirt and ugliness. Through Dreck's experience White realizes the Keatsian ideal: "She dwells with beauty, Beauty that must die." (*John Keats*)

It is the world and the woman with whom Hurtle is in conflict that nourishes the soul of the artist. Hurtle paints the 'Flowering Rosebush,' at the heart of which is a child's face. It seems more about Hurtle and Rhoda than about Kathy. As the painting becomes more abstract the face is "reduced to an eye" (*The Vivisector* 561) which is connected with Hurtle's first childhood painting of the Mad Eye. The surrounding roses identify his soul-mate, Rhoda. Kathy and Rhoda are equals meeting on a spiritual level. They both need Hurtle as he needs them. Kathy wishes to give birth to a purer self in music as Hurtle attempts in his paintings. She is an egoist and "a flawed masterpiece." (*The Vivisector* 515) Being a pianist, she could sense the close relation between music and painting. Kathy is able to understand what Hurtle could not say about the things he painted. She acknowledges the inspiration she receives in her letter to Duffield:

Hurtle receives a "horribly illuminating" (*The Vivisector* 613) letter from Mrs. Volkov before he begins his final painting. She says that she too has been "stroked by God" (*The Vivisector* 613) and achieved a state

of oneness while noticing the “sea and sky as one and me like a rinsed plate.” (*The Vivisector* 612) The revealing letter pricks out a new direction in him. Mixing “the never yet attainable blue,” (*The Vivisector* 616) Hurtle starts painting the “blessedblue” (*The Vivisector* 617) all his life he has been struggling to reach this “vertiginous blue” (*The Vivisector* 616) Lying on the pavement he recognizes his “longstanding secret relationship” (*The Vivisector* 616) with it. Colour symbolism is predominant in all the novels of White. In the novel, blue and gold, the colours of sky and sun are associated with celestial glory.

Illuminated by an image of God, Hurtle dies in his studio. For Hurtle, this is the “unnamable I-N-D-I-G-O.” (*The Vivisector* 617) Ellen Conroy in “*The Symbolism of Colour*” says that the colour blue-indigo is “the colour of heavens-adobe of God.” David Marr points out that “Blue had been colour of God ever since White sat at Bong Bong in front of the tin scroll that announced God was love.” (*A Life* 488)

According to Carolyn Bliss the last words of Hurtle and of the novel” “too tired, too end-less obi indi-ggodd” equate God with the “unnamable I-N-D-I-G-O” suggesting that god is that final unity in which all such antitheses as artist/ vivisector or creator/destroyer are subsumed.” (*Carolyn Bliss* 476)

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Mahasweta Devi - A Writer of Tribals

*Ritu Dewan**

Incredible it may sound, but the fact is that the tribals have played important roles in all rebellions and great movements in India. Not only naxalbari-movements but Tebhaga, Bodo. etc. are the part of tribal movements. However, not much attention has been paid towards the tribals. Even freedom from colonial rule did not bring much change in the position of the tribals. In post-colonial India, as well, they continue to be marginalized, and are often regarded as the ‘Subaltern.’ Mahasweta Devi is one writer who has really touched the lives of tribals and has penned down their everyday life and their problems in a heart touching manner. She not only writes about them but is actively involved in their upliftment. She has been awarded Padamshree for her services to the tribals. Mahasweta Devi’s concern for the tribals is clearly brought out in an interview with Gayatri Spivak:

They can’t keep their land; there is no education for them, no health facilities... they are denied everything... That is why I started writing about tribal movements and the tribal, world... I repay them their honour. (Notes for Anveshi 3-4)

The exploitation of the tribals in India started with the onslaught of the British Colonial Rule. The economic needs of the British were meted out by depriving the tribals of their land. The minor tribes were restrained from assimilating with the main stream. These tribes were later de-notified by Indian Government in 1952. The pathetic plight of these de-notified tribes were brought to the forefront by activists like Maha Shweta Devi and Ganesh Devi. The condition of tribals in post independent India followed a similar plight as they were ruthlessly marginalized by the main stream discourse of development.

Mahasweta Devi has been working for the tribals of Bengal for three decades. It has led to the setting up of the Denotified and Nomadic tribals and communities Right Action Group. The fact that tribal activism often ends in failure at every level, in no way diminishes the heroic grandeur of the indomitable spirit of the tribal will, which in fact is described by Mahasweta Devi with perfection and passion. Most of her works deal with the tribal folk of India and highlight her concern for the subaltern.

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In *Draupdi* (Devi, "Breast Stories" trans. Spivak 19), the central character Dopdi Mejhan, a tribal woman does what Mahabharata's Draupdi could not. She cannot save her modesty with yards of miraculous saree, so she disrobes herself. She is arrested and stripped by the police again and again. Mahasweta Devi portrays her as a personification of defiance. She is arrested because she along with some of her friends want some rights to be given to the tribals. They are fighting with government that they can lead a decent life. But the village head or the Sahukaar does not want them to make their people aware of their rights. This is the reason why she is arrested. At the end the sananayak, who is a police officer goes to her. She accosts the instigator of her torment with a naked body. She boldly asks him, "You can strip me, but how can you clothe me again? Are you a man? What more can you do?" (36). Sananayak is taken aback and he is "afraid to stand before an unarmed target, terribly afraid." (37).

Jungle Ke Daavadaar (The Rightful claimants of the forest), is another significant work by Mahasweta Devi. It depicts the tribal movement and revolt by legendary Birsa Munda, an epoch-making fighter who died at the age of only twenty-five. His death is not natural but he seems to have been poisoned. The story also deals with the skin-deep humanism of the missionaries who would dole out help and assistance only as long as the mundas are ready to convert themselves to Christianity. It is a moving story of Birsa Munda's life and the revolt led by him for the rights of tribals. According to him tribals are the real owners of sylvan environs. The story not only depicts the misery and destitution of Mundas but is also a mockery of law and order. It exposes the perpetration of blatant injustice in the name of justice. His arrest spread panic among all those who had thought things would improve with Birsa's arrest. According to Sachi Arya, "Birsa's glorious life and more glorious death, his insatiable thirst for freedom, his preparedness to sacrifice life, and bright optimism that the fight would go on constitute a chapter of our independence struggle that would do any Indian proud." (98).

In *Aajir* (Bandyopadhyay, "Five Plays" 35), Mahasweta Devi talks about the slave system. "The term Aajir stands for the one who has sold himself into slavery for a paltry sum."⁷ It is essentially a social play in which Mahasweta Devi gives an expression to the sufferings of under-privileged in their confrontation with powerful exploitative mechanism. Paatan, the protagonist is a descendant of a family of slaves. His ancestor Golak Kura, due to extreme poverty sold himself, his wife and his progeny to continuous slavery for just three rupees. Paatan as a slave has to suffer

all kinds of indignities and humiliations at the hands of his master. N.D Kamble rightly states, "In practice, bonded labour in India is the culmination of debtor-creditor relation into slave and master relation. But the bonded labour is an out come of socio-economic system prevailing in India economic dependence and poverty of the under-privileged sections of the society forced them to be slaves." (3).

Water (93), is a sarcastic attack on the typical hindu psyche. Maghai, the hero is a dome, an untouchable who is denied drinking water by upper castes. It is not at all unusual. It is found not only in the tribal regions of West-Bengal but at other places in India even today. Maghai is water diviner. The upper caste people come to seek his opinion as where to dig a well or a hand pump. He is addressed as Bhagirath (one who had brought Ganga to earth) but is not allowed to use that water. All other *domes* are also subjected to the same kind of exploitation. He can't dig well for his people due to the huge some of money it will need. Not even a single penny of the relief money is allowed to come their way. Rather it is spent on the construction of a temple thereby ignoring the basic problems of unemployment, hunger, drinking water and so on. So for the whole life he kept on struggling and feeling guilty for not providing water to his people despite of water diviner. Santosh Puri, the Villian having realized the threat to his existence, turns authorities against him (Maghai) and got him killed. The reason for his (Santosh Puri) insecurity is Jatin Mithai, a noble school master. Enlighten by him, Meghai defies the traditional norms by constructing a dam in order to quench the thrust of his people and this leads to his death.

Gouhan (Devi 1987). again is a tale of the unbearable life of tribals and untouchables. But Gouhan is not willing to take everything easily. She fights boldly and struggles for liberation. In fact Gouhan is a nick name given to the leading woman character Jhalo after deadly poisonous snake bearing the same name. She has a sense of tribal respect and dignity. So much so when the tehsildar tries to molest her she attacks him with a sickle and made him pay rupees twenty five as compensation. Gouhan's husband dies in landslide also not in favour of bonded labour and represents sane and sensible voice of protest against perpetuation of exploitation. His exposure to the outside world has made him aware of what is happening around and thus is able to liberate himself from the imaginary fear of the landlord's potential to harm him. He tells boldly to his contractor, "Yes, lord, I'll just not account for the sum of Rs. One hundred. My bondage is over. Laxman Singh, the contractor is shocked

and finally comes to realize that the poor and illiterate people of that place are becoming aware of their rights. He looks towards Samundar “The people of Latha-toli were moving ahead enclosing the landlords and Laxman. Everybody looked like Gohuan, whose violent hissing signified sure death.”

Mahasweta Devi definitely appears to be a writer with commitment. More than an author, she appears in the light of a social reformer. The works of Mahasweta Devi shows the resentment against exploitation viz-a-viz tribal exploitation, women exploitation, backward class exploitation and a wishful desire for a sort of happiness. Her women characters like Draupdi, Gouhan, Sharichari, Chandni Dasi, Daulati etc. give a message of hope in an otherwise depressing world. Most of her writing is concentrated on exploitation, oppression, status of women, bonded labour, forced prostitution etc.

The tribals, their history and their life have become an integral part of Mahasweta’s life. Her love for these, and intense against their exploitation has made her world-view distinguished and lent a humanistic aura to her activism.

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Arundhati Roy : Beyond The God of Small Things

By Shelley Mannan

84 pages. Rs.250/-

Arundhati Roy recently figured as one of the 100 most influential people in the world in an annual list released by Times. Best known as the author of the Booker Prize winning, *The God of Small Things*, Roy has been hailed as “the novelist who is the conscience of India”. Through her book, *Arundhati Roy: Beyond The God of Small Things*, Shelly Mannan fully explores both the facets of Roy’s persona—that of an exceptional artist and a political activist.

Shelley Mannan has based her exploration of Arundhati Roy on two of her most important works – her solo, prize winning novel *The God of Small things* and a collection of essays that focus on issues related to social justice and economic inequality, *The Algebra of Infinite Justice*. One fictional, another factual.

The book begins with a brief profile of the writer. Then, it delivers a detailed investigation into the novel *The God of Small Things*. Its daring themes, the multiple social power structures at play among the realistically portrayed characters, as well as the “intriguing” techniques used in the book are all examined thoroughly. Again, in the chapter dealing with *The Algebra of Infinite Justice*, the themes, the structure and techniques of all the six essays of the books are discussed at length. While describing Roy as an effective writer, Mannan calls Roy a “skilled scientist”, a “proficient lawyer” who supports her opinions with well researched facts and figures. Her adeptness at English language and her “mercurial imagination” makes her writings a force to reckon with. Mannan discusses Roy’s “architectural frame” and “cinematographic technique” and says that “she transforms the insipid, crude, dry and monotonous discussion of the burning issues into immortal pieces of art....”

The title of the book suggests that we look at Arundhati Roy not simply as someone who has written an outstanding novel called *The God*

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of *Small things*. In so far as Mannan wants the reader to look at Roy not only as a “literary artist” but also as a “literary social activist”, she fully succeeds in her mission. Hence the book effectively investigates Roy as a committed artist as well as a champion of causes. But, what is most significant about the book is the exposition of Roy as someone who reinvents and re appropriates the English language. Mannan takes obvious pleasure in Roy’s small tweaks to spelling, capitalization, and compound words. The book reflects a learned appreciation for Roy’s inventiveness and flexibility with the language. She calls Roy a “word maestro” and credits her for considerably enriching English language and literature.

Shelly Mannan is a scholar of repute who has years of teaching experience and has published many research papers. She clearly admires Arundhati Roy and her work. She argues that Roy’s literary status should be determined through the quality rather than the quantity of her work and that recognition of her work will “give the much-needed fillip to quality writing in the literary world....” Mannan succeeds in establishing Roy’s place in the history of Indian Writing in English as an original and innovative writer. The book, it can be safely said, offers some of the best scholarship available on Arundhati Roy. With Roy as one of the important Indian writers in the curriculum of many universities in India and abroad, the book can prove an important resource to students of English literature. The book is well referenced and would be most useful for any study on Arundhati Roy.

Book Review

2

Contemporary Indian Poetry In English: A Socio-Political Perspective

Shelly Mannan

Unistar, Chandigarh.

210 pages. Rs. 495/-

Indian English poetry is the oldest form of Indian English literature. It represents various stages of our multitudinous cultural and national life. Dr. Shelley Mannan in her book *Contemporary Indian Poetry in English: A Socio Political Perspective* supplies a comprehensive account of socio-political reality as portrayed in the Contemporary Indian Poetry in English (IPE) especially that written 1975 onwards. At the bottom, of course, is the premise that English is an Indian language. And that poetry is used as

a medium to express feelings and emotions, discontent and displeasure, agony and anger over the evils prevalent in our society. Mannan has chosen those poets for appraisal who have written poetry with a specific purpose of bringing an awakening...they mirror the harsh realities of contemporary life in their poetry, focusing on the crisis and the turmoil of the present age. These poets also show divergence from the conventional modes of expression and exercise liberty in form, content, and use of language.

The book presents a broad outline of some of the significant Indian poets who have written in English. Beginning with Nissim Ezekiel, the survey includes the themes and writing styles of well known poets such as R. Parthasarthy, Jayant Mahapatra, A.K. Ramanujan, Adil Jussawala, R.K.Singh, I.K. Sharma, Kamla Das, Monica Verma, Tara Patel etc. However these poets are only identified as precursors to the work of the six select poets whose work she has chosen to probe more thoroughly. For a more in-depth enquiry, Mannan has chosen three male and three female poets namely K.N. Daruwalla, I.H. Rizvi, O.P. Bhatnagar, Mamta Kalia, Sudha Iyer and Imtiaz Dharker. Male and female poets have been dealt with in separate chapters. In another chapter, male and female poets have been juxtaposed to explore the differences in male and female mind sets, points of view and their different modes of poetic expression.

The detailed analysis of the three male poets reflects their “sense of alienation, cultural crisis, loss of individual identity” as also “the social, political, familial, national and cosmopolitan conflicts experienced in modern life and living”. According to Mannan, these poets are much more troubled by existential questions and a search for meaning in their life as compared to the poets of the pre independence period. These poets show their discontent and attack the evil and unpleasant malpractices embedded in our society. Hence, anger against government’s functioning, superstitions, corruption, hunger, death, population, materialistic attitude, environmental pollution, women empowerment, marriage are some of the themes dealt with in their poetry. The social and political realities of post modern India have been responded to in a post modern style by these poets. As representatives of post independence poets, these poets “exhibit a marked shift from romantic to real, from clichéd and hackneyed to new and avant-garde, from conventional to unconventional and from traditional to experimental”. Besides extensively using irony and self reflexive technique, their poetry is marked by variation in versification, metre, line-length, and use of other poetic devices. The chapter also compares these selected poets with other fellow poets.

Not lagging behind in creativity and communicating their thoughts uninhibitedly are several women poets in India writing in English. Using their unique female sensibility, the women poets tackle social, political and cultural issues of “national and international ramifications” in their poetry thereby “enriching our Indian English literature”. Mannan has also shown how select women writers have touched topics like politics (Sudha Iyer, Intiaz Dharker) and used techniques like humour (Sudha Iyer) which has traditionally been considered male bastions.

An important aspect of the book is the juxtaposition of male and female poets. Mannan opines that while the themes and subjects of both the genders may be similar, they display distinct differences in style, perspective and technique. While the male poets are more inventive in diction, “cerebral, analytical, intellectual and laborious”, the women poets are colloquial in their style; they are “lyrical, emotional and straightforward”. Men write from the brain, women write from the heart.

This book is an excellent resource to students and educators of IPE. Since IPE, especially from socio political perspective is rather an uncharted area of study, the significance and scope of the book becomes imperative. Dr. Mannan earned her Ph. D in the same subject, that is, on contemporary scenario in Indian Poetry in English. That, along with her years of teaching experience and research work on Indian writers makes her an authority of sorts on the subject. Mannan not only scrutinizes and digs out the social and political content from the poetry of almost 20 male and female Indian poets; she has also meticulously probed the poetry of six select poets in detail who have tried to stimulate the conscience of their readers through their poetry. Dr. Mannan’s easy-to-read style of writing conceals her scholarship and the wide spectrum of poets that she investigates. The book can be highly useful to graduates and post graduate students of English Literature. Besides, those who are interested to know more about Indian poetry in English will find the book valuable.

Glimpses of the One Day National Seminar on “Major Trends in Contemporary English Literature (since 1990) organised by Pragati Educational Council on February 16, 2014 at Guru Nanak District Library, Jalandhar.



Prof. G C Mago, Dr. N K Neb & Others inaugurating the Seminar



Dr. N.K. Neb , the Org.Sec. of the seminar addressing the participants



Dr. Rohit Phutela from DAVIET Jalandhar presenting his paper



Dr. Monika Sethi from Jammu Uni. Jammu presenting her paper



Prof. Loveleen Bains presenting her paper



Dr. Navleen Multani presenting her paper . Dr. Avinash Bawa Dr. L.S.Gill, Prof. G.C. Mago and Dr. Barinder Sharma are sitting on the stage.

Dr. Ninod Chopra from Himachal Pradesh presenting his paper while Ms. Tulika Kakkar and Dr. Manjit Kaur from Chandigarh are sitting on the stage



Dr. L.S. Gill presenting his paper in the National Seminar. Sitting on the stage are Dr. Avinash Bawa , Prof. Sonika Dania and Prof. Archana Oberoi

Dr. Ashoo Toor Gill from Punjab Agriculture University Ludhiana presenting her paper in the National Seminar



Sitting among the audience: Dr. Anoop Vats , Dr. Manjit Kaur , Prof. Sonika Dania , Prof. Archana Oberoi Prof. Mrs. Arvinder Beri , Ms. Gaganpreet, Loveleen Bains Prof. Renu Gupta and Prof. Naresh Kumar

Holey Prayer by G. C. Mago Released

In a Function organized by Bowry Memorial Educational and Medical Trust Prof. P.N. Rajput (Formerly Head Dept. of English D.A.V. College Jalandhar) released the collection of poems by G. C. Mago in the presence of august audience that included Dr Anup Bowry (Secraetary Bowry Memorial Educational and Medical Trust), Dr. Chander Bowry, Mrs. Shally Bowry and Mrs. Aradhana Bowry . Dr. N. K. Neb, Prof. Sharad Manocha P.G. Dept. of English D.A.V. College and Prof. Satish Sharma (discussed various thematic and artistic features of the book. The Holey Prayer was equated to an epic by Prof. Satish Sharma, Dr. N.K. Neb brought out the artistic and structural aspects of the poem and Prof. Sharad Manocha talked about the concern Prof. Mago has shown about man's drift from the spiritual to the mundane world following false gods.

Mr. Dheeraj Banati, Diretor Principal was the master of ceremonies and anchored the whole program efficiently and impressively.



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