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Translated Postcolonialism : Comparing Tiwana and Rushdie

*Dr. Sukhdeep Ghuman**

The impetus for the present paper comes academically from the new trends in postcolonial studies accompanied by a fresh – relatively broader – understanding of the term ‘postcolonial’ and more immediately, from the need to push vernacular literature to centre-stage of critical engagement beyond the regional/national boundaries. In other words, local stakes a claim in the global. To this end then, a close reading of the translated work of Dalip Kaur Tiwana’s *Gone are the Rivers* has been undertaken and also, its comparison with the most celebrated, postcolonial work of the subcontinent *Midnight’s Children* has been attempted in order that the two different strands of postcoloniality represented by these hugely different writings can be posited as an argument for the widening of the concept of the postcolonial. Despite inadequacies at the level of translation, the claim of the text to be included in the postcolonial canon has been argued.

The homogenizing institutional postcolonialism has been under review for some time now and its dominance by some earmarked themes is being challenged by the recent theoretical perspectives. In the same spirit of enquiry, S. Shankar in his *Flesh and the Fish Blood*¹ has convincingly built a case against marginalization of the vernacular – as against transnational – as one of the species of postcolonial investigation. Taking Rushdie as a point of departure, he exposes a prejudice not only against literatures written in other Indian languages but also against those works in English that lack the cosmopolitan flavour. Invoking an aptly suggestive metaphor, he calls these works the ‘orphans’ of midnight as against the favoured children of writings in English. In a further elaboration of the ‘vernacular’, he clarifies that the term refers to a local, rooted sensibility rather than language per se, meaning thereby that there is a possibility of vernacularity in English as well as non-English literatures; language itself is not indicative of or synonymous with a vernacular sensibility. And, it is the vernacular sensibility that has got a raw deal at the hands of postcolonial theorists. Discussing his objectives in the preface, Shankar clarifies: “By vernacular knowledges I mean those oriented away from the transnational, the modern, and the hybrid and toward the local, the traditional, and the culturally autonomous. Because of certain biases

* Associate Professor, P.G. Department of English , B.U.C. College Batala

that I explore in detail in the book, postcolonial studies has faltered in acknowledging and exploring these vernacular knowledges” (Shankar xv).

Most theorizing in the field of postcolonial studies has grounded itself in an outlook variously identified as cosmopolitan, postmodern, hybrid, diasporic and suchlike pervasively informing works of Rushdie et al and allegedly absent in works of regional languages. The objective is not to discover these themes and attitudes in vernacular literature but to draw critical attention to a different kind of postcoloniality – as distinct from the transnational – that can eventually give more roots to the theory of postcolonialism. His analysis traces the following line of argument: The corollary of this emphasis on the hybrid is the erasure of certain other arenas of cultural endeavor, certain other sensibilities or ideologies. Thus influential forms of postcolonial criticism and theory have generally been suspicious of any robust idea of the local or the vernacular, when these terms mark hostility to the hybridizing force of transnational cultural flows (20). It is in this context that I now turn to our chosen text.

Dalip Kaur Tiwana, a well-known Punjabi writer, has been read most often through the prism of feminism as most female writers are. Here, my reading of her *Lang Gaye Darya* translated as *Gone are the Rivers*² will be guided by a postcolonial perspective. She has dedicated her work to the unrecorded history of Patiala, a former princely state in the Undivided Punjab. Suffused with folklore and ‘feminine’ knowledge, it provides a fine interpretation of the times spanning both colonial and postcolonial by offering a complex texture of interwoven themes of feminism, modernity, fall of aristocracy, power-intrigue, nation-formation and the like. If postcoloniality is taken as a stance against the colonizing/subjectivizing forces, vernacular literature cannot be legitimately left out of the canon of postcolonial literature. Translation activity in this context can be enabling for the category of ‘vernacular’ as constructed by Shankar. In this part, I intend to offer a reading of the original as well as the translated work to see how successfully or otherwise, the act of translation has served the core intent and the vernacular sensibility of the writer from a postcolonial perspective.

The narrative strides over three generations of a Sikh aristocratic family starting with Sardar Bakhshish Singh, an aide to the Maharaja, his two wives, two daughters and an only son, Gurbakhshish Singh. By the end, Gurbakhshish’s daughter Dolly is ready to marry a Hindu man, which becomes the apparent cause of her father’s death. Her mother and aunts have already chosen separate itineraries –having been victimized in the

patriarchal order where a man's honour is prioritized over a woman's dignity, happiness, even life. The domestic tragedy is played out against a background of feudalistic state and its autocratic ruler referred to as 'Sarkar' – meaning Government – that reluctantly accede more and more space to the west-induced, half-hearted process of democratization.

The novel begins with a description: "Surrounded by a desolate garden, this big, blue kothi with thick walls and high ceiling looks greyish at this hour – as if it were made of dense clouds, as if it were a wave in the sea. This is Sardar Bakhshish Singh's kothi" (Tiwana 1). The 'greyish' looking structure with desolation and ruin writ large over it, haunted by Sardar's spirit, inhabited by ghost-like misfits is a rich symbol for a way of life long past, a world that is no longer. Greyish, incidentally, does only half a job as the original Punjabi word 'ghasmali' means much more than a colour; it connotes something over-worn and past its prime. The comparison with clouds and waves hint at its formation through much bigger forces of which it is only a symptom. The inmates of the kothi are all adrift, at a loss, suspended in a world that has moved on leaving them behind. Without their earlier moorings and contexts that had given them meaning, there is only despair of meaninglessness "When day dawns, these people wait for the night and when night falls they wait for the day"(1)

What structure is this? A feminist reading would see the strongly built high-ceilinged, thick walled 'kothi' as patriarchy that makes one of its inmates, the west-educated Rosie so nervous that she runs away to Delhi. Another possible, more inclusive reading would base itself on the kothi as a trope for the aristocratic way of life and see the text as an authentic representation of the pre-independence socio-economic conditions of the state of Patiala, now part of Punjab, against an overall colonial context through a feminine, domestic filter. Being a princely state, Patiala does not directly confront a visible presence of the colonizer, but the subtly colonized 'Sarkar', as evidenced in his love for Cricket, his quest for Men of Excellence in the west, his regard for Paris, his quoting of Aristotle, and his regular western guests has certainly internalized the superiority of western culture. His attempt to be at par with the British, through defiance at times, through employing white staff, and through aligning with the French keep him trapped within the western paradigm. Despite the fact that the exigencies of ruling keep him bound to the local rituals and traditions, he is definitely swayed by all things west dictating his personal choice and taste.

The second part of the narrative begins most pertinently with "This is America." Sardar's elder daughter's immigration to America is symptomatic of the neo-imperialism of the post '47 Punjab. Her English poetry writing ex-husband has defected to the other side and married a white woman and she herself has quietly receded into the background, bringing up her children, carrying out responsibilities mechanically, dutifully which leaves her no time to miss her family or even to mourn her father and 'elder' mother who passed away in Punjab. The impartial contrast offered between the fates of two sisters who grew up in the same family also is suggestive of the ability of the writer to penetrate the surfaces to perceive a deeper reality – one has chosen to recede into a past that cannot be and the other has stoically accepted an alien present.

Harpreet's visit to Punjab after many years of absence is very revealing as to the nature of transformations that have taken place during the transition to an allegedly modern nation-state. She cannot find her way to her Father's mansion as all the orienting landmarks have been either lost or mutilated beyond recognition. "She was surprised – the tank in which a hundred lotuses had bloomed ... where had the water gone? To her, even Gandhi's statue seemed to have shrunk, somehow dwarfed by its surroundings" (72). Leela Bhawan, the erstwhile abode of Maharaja, has lots of 'nagar' encroachments all around. The centres of power have shifted but ironically enough, it is still concentrated in a few hands e.g., the 'palace' that once belonged to the royalty seems to have gone to the other side of the road and is now owned by a cinema owner. Most of the nobility - many among whom are Harpreet's relatives - are shown to have completed a cycle of decadence and their children are, in Gurbakhshish's words, "repaying the debt of their parents" (84). Since they took more than what they gave to life, the debt had to be settled by the younger generation. As a decadent nobility gives way to a new form of capitalistic elite and an aspiring middle class, social inequalities like the caste issue remain largely unaddressed, unresolved.

The reader is required to go beyond the family saga and partake in something larger is indicated by the fact that no single character is allowed to dominate the entire narrative which also corroborates the express intention of the writer to present an alternative, unofficial version of history. The focus moves continuously from one character to the other, from one place to the other and within a short span it covers Patiala, France, America and back to a changed, postcolonial Patiala.

The kind of colonialism we experience here is highly nuanced and would be more pertinent to what is known as the cultural/ideological forms of colonialism. All the Sardars, following the trend-setting monarch, experiment tentatively with activities that are alien to their own culture but have come to be associated with power. To name a few: switching to 'mixed' parties for men and women, drinking foreign liquor, teaching of English language to their children by English tutors, spending summers in hills and so on. All of them mimic their Maharaja who in turn is taking the cue from the English sovereign.

All the characters are presented to be struggling with forces bigger than themselves and these socio-historical cross currents are built into the narrative with acumen by Tiwana – a far cry from the charge of parochialism that Rushdie levels against vernacular literatures. His comments echo, as noted by Shankar, Macaulay's infamous Minutes in being dismissive about literatures of Indian languages: "The besetting sin of the vernacular language is parochialism. It's as if the twentieth century hasn't arrived in many of these languages . . ." ³ Further on, he pejoratively calls it 'Tractor Art' by which he again emphasizes the limited and non-refined nature of the vernacular art. The following comparison purports to counter these unfounded claims further.

Whereas Rushdie resorts to the fantastic to represent the multitudinous reality of India, Tiwana has achieved the same from the inside via social/psychological realism. There are parallelisms that one can trace in both these 'alternative' histories, although Tiwana does not aspire to speak for the whole nation. Despite her canvas being consciously and conspicuously narrow, her critique is every bit as sophisticated as any. There are striking similarities with the transnational epic of the subcontinent by Rushdie. The famous motif of mixed parentage and hidden genealogies is also there in its non-fantastic, down-to-earth, everyday form. There are faked pregnancies and switching of newborns for the sake of property and titles which is all part of the endless power-intrigue that goes on in the corridors of aristocracy. On a realistic plane however, these are made integral, a 'natural' part of the narrative and are rooted in the local cultural traditions.

To trace another such parallel, one of Sardar's friends, 'Sappan wale Sardar' recalls the fantastic figure of Dr Schaapsteker in the *Midnight's* narrative. Both are passionate about their collection of snakes. What appears fantastic in the magic realism mode is part of everyday reality in the fictional world of Tiwana. The figure of snake-lover is grotesque

there, but here, it is meant to give an extra dimension to the elitist aura which by definition is extra-ordinary. The nobility is shown to be above the ordinary laws and conventions and therefore, their lives, their behavior and eccentricities are discussed, admired or criticized even but never questioned or challenged.

The vernacular spirit of the Gone are the Rivers comes alive in the representation of folk traditions, superstition, religious practices and rituals, popular beliefs – all ingredients of what has been called an Indian sensibility but these constitute a lived reality, not a specially displayed Indian exotica for western consumption. Centering on a much smaller number of characters, it is an amazingly dense narrative that manages to achieve a most comprehensive critique of the times bringing into its orbit all classes of society and tracing their interdependence and mutualities from a domestic perspective. The writer is unflinching in her incisive analysis of the structures of power and how they shifted and reconfigured during and after colonial rule in the Indian subcontinent. Economical in its use of words, the narrative is most successful in offering a portrayal of the under flowing currents of history affecting one and all. It is worthwhile to quote here a longish passage from the text to appreciate the interweaving of the individual and the historical changes that ultimately constitute the existential reality of human societies: On the surface, the world went on as usual. Patiala city stood where it always had. So did the mansion and those who lived in it continued to do so. But the elder Sardarni felt that nothing was the same after the death of Sardar Bakhshish Singh – neither the world, nor Patiala city, nor the mansion or its citizens. So much so that she felt that she herself was not the same elder Sardarni that she used to be. Thereafter, history began to turn its pages quickly. The slumbering land awakened. The alien rulers were put to flight. While fleeing, they axed the country (Tiwana 64).

It is history that is the chief concern for both writers but they approach it from different vantage points. Rushdie's postmodernist take on history denies dignity to actual people and characters are therefore shown to be "handcuffed to history" ⁴ to a degree that they approximate puppet-like entities tossed helplessly about by its vicissitudes. In contrast, Tiwana looks at both – the people and the forces larger than people with an understanding that is cosmopolitan in its sweep. Her social realism traces a different route than the magic realism employed by Rushdie. But the point being made here is that both are valid ways of representing reality and worthy of critical attention from the postcolonial perspective.

Lastly, the comparison offered here between the two writers calls for a comment on the act of comparison itself. We compare for two reasons, mostly – one is to establish our superiority and the other is to initiate the entry/inclusion into the arena of the superior. The comparatist dialogue between the self and the other usually has one of these as its motivation. It is because we live in an unequal and uneven world and can only perceive through our own placing within that given structuring. Nevertheless, an instructive comparison has to be founded on the desire for a new knowledge. To paraphrase and quote Radhakrishnan⁵ in this context: Although “comparisons are never disinterested” (Radhakrishnan 454), the ideal comparatist project is to be carried out “in the name of a radical nothingness or namelessness” and is to lead to “fundamental epistemological transformations” (470). This would pave the way not only for bonding South-South better but also eventually overcome the North-South divide revealing the world as One. My reading of Tiwana vis-à-vis Rushdie has traversed these various dimensions of the comparatist experience.

Notes and References

1. Shankar, Subramanian (2012), *Flesh and Fish Blood: Postcolonialism, Translation, and the Vernacular*, London: University of California Press. When quoted, the page numbers are in the parentheses.
2. Tiwana, Dalip Kaur (1990), *Lang Gaye Darya*, trans. Singh, Bhupinder and Narula, S.C. (1998), *Gone are the Rivers*, Chennai: Macmillan India Ltd. When quoted, the page numbers have been given in the parentheses.
3. Rushdie, Salman (1997), qtd in Shankar, 4.
4. Rushdie, Salman (1981), *Midnight's Children*, London: Jonathan Cape, 11.
5. RadhaKrishnan, R. “Why Compare?”, *New Literary History*, 40.3 (Summer 2009): 453-471.

G. C. Mago's *A Holey Prayer* : An Artistic Attack on Unholy Practices

Dr. N. K. Neb*

Poetry, like other forms of verbal art, functions through the production of rhetoric for reading, reception and interpretation. Apart from the use of language acts, poetry acquires greater artistic worth due to its quality of recitation. These elements are used, particularly in poetry, to engage the attention of the reader and carry his interest so that he spends some time on thinking about the artistic presentation while experiencing aesthetic pleasure. It implies that a work of art is supposed to have the qualities that carry an appeal for the audience or its consumers. Their interest in this art form is usually governed by twin aspects of aesthetic and intellectual pleasure. In other words, a reader is likely to value a work of art if he finds the devices used attractive, charming, interesting and wonderful or the subject matter pleasing, amusing, instructive, socially relevant and offering new perceptions about the reality around. Poetry becomes more effective when it succeeds in making the expression of ideas wonderful providing a charming exercise in aesthetic and intellectual terms. Both these aspects tend to combine in satirical poetry that usually demands lesser intellectual efforts from the reader as the life spectacle subjected to satire carries a sense of familiarity and often the readers are likely to identify the aspects of life transcribed in art. The kind of author reader concord that such works are likely to develop can be observed in G. C. Mago's *A Holey Prayer* (Mago, 2014). It makes the satire in the poem more effective, easily understandable and artistic.

The poem, woven around the turmoil and anguished experiences of a sinful soul, explores the protagonist's internal and external journey in search of redemption. Using the motif of a journey, the poet provides glimpses into the forms of life informing commercialization of religion, the way it has been used by cunning minds to exploit the gullible, troubled and suffering people. The presentation of these aspects of life has a special appeal for the readers for its correspondence with contemporary reality. The popular nature of the subject treated in this poem comes forth when we find the same aspects of life depicted in some of the popular Hindi films like 'Oh My God' and 'P.K'. Despite the choice of a contemporary popular issue as the central focus of the poem, it is the treatment that Mago has awarded to the theme that makes it significant work of poetry.

* Associate Professor, PG Department of English, DAV College, Jalandhar.

The poetic devices used in *A Holy Prayer* engage and attract the readers to understand the experiences presented in the poem to realize the frivolous, functional, casual and misplaced understanding of religion that the poem exposes. It makes the satire in the poem effective, and powerful.

Coupled with the popular nature of the theme its development in the form of a narrative involving a story makes the poem dramatic and rich with visuals. This drama is poised against the amorous, sensuous, physical, sensational and fantastic experiences of bodily pleasures. It sets the tone and tenor of the satire expressed in the poem. The initial crisis in the form of indulgence in unaccepted social behaviour gets pointed out in the very beginning through oblique references like 'glittering pearls', 'enticed to chase them', and :

The urge to play Cupid
Stirred my blended being
And a search for a damsel
Did hold my heart (p.8)

The narration of such activities has the potential to offer vicarious pleasure to the reader when such experiences are described in words like:

I loosed my self in the flesh
And wallowed in her bosoms soft
And drowned in her thighs warm (p.10)

The impending crisis takes shape in the form of a stirring caused in the conscience of the protagonist who otherwise had become 'an addict to the raw'. It comes to the fore as a gnawing experience :

Awake throughout the night
For reasons known and unknown
One of the several acts
Became a gnawing experience (p.12)

It results in extreme mental suffering, a corroding sense of guilt ensues. It makes the protagonist experience the agony of being sinful that compels him to go to the temple of God, 'Admonished and bruised with bosom wrung'. The crisis, its severity, the trauma it causes and the final realization that comes as a respite develop in the form of a drama enacted in the internal as well as the external plain.

The dramatization of the whole experience offers immediacy of appeal to the readers. Instead of something romantic, imaginary and fantastic, that poetry is often associated with, the poetic material in '*A Holy Prayer*' rather carries fictional charm by describing scenes, narrating,

anecdotes expressing compelling observations in evocative terms. The protagonist's indulgence in wayward behaviour, experiencing a sense of guilt realized like, "An unknown anguish For decimating a soul tender (11), and the efforts made to have peace of mind by taking sleeping pills, his setting off to a journey to get rid of an acute sense of guilt appear in the form of elaborate scenes like that of a film on the silver screen. Another related aspect of Mago's narrative skill comes forth in his ability to compress a whole story into a poetic stanza. The poetic rendition of the dramatic tale concerning Shakespeare's Hamlet offers an interesting and effective example in this context:

He was the one who planned
And murdered his brother in cold blood
And connived with his once sister-in-law
And made her his wife (p.15)

Such details facilitate the construction of a context that provides useful and fruitful ground for the poem to satirize false sham of religion and its degenerated and polluted form being practiced in the contemporary times.

Despite the development of '*A Holy Prayer*' on the pattern of a dramatic narrative in poetic form what make it an effective work of poetry is its highly suggestive language and the nature of images used in it. The use of language with all its subtlety and suggestiveness saves the poem from turning into a simple, prosaic, expression and adds to its complexity relating to the multiple associations that it evokes. Mago's use of expressions like 'queen pearl' 'green bud' 'raw', 'agent' 'devotee deity' 'living deity' 'disciple deity' and the lines used to connote the sinful experience are highly suggestive :

A green bud in raw
Fell into my youthful bed
And like a tender drop
That seeped into earth (p11)

It conveys many things without actually having said anything in a specific way. How it functions to make linguistic expressions more artistic and effective can be realized through a comparison of such elements with the following line that border on prose due to their sheer lack of suggestiveness:

To express sex
A crowd is convenient in the bus
During the Puja he rubs hard

His cock against the ladies' bottoms
(Singh, R. K., 2008:9)

Here it is pertinent to note that the satire in Mago's poem and in the lines quoted above is almost equally apparent, but the subtlety of expression makes the satire more artistic and poetic. It also brings out the difference between the language of poetry and the language of science and prose pointed out by formalists and the New Critics. This difference is understood as "the difference between practical language-meant for communication purposes only, and the poetic language-that involves deviation, distortion and a complex use of language—directed to defamiliarize the commonplace objects and experiences. Literary language goes beyond the practical language in making us see things differently. So the language of poetry is metaphoric".(Neb,2005: 59). Mago's exploitation of the potential of language for poetic use tends to intensify and extend duration of perception, and process of realizing the experiences presented.

The satirical treatment of the subject in *A Holey Prayer* gets further sharpened and becomes more powerful through the element of word music, the arrangement and choice of words corresponding with the rhythm of ideas. These elements add to the recitative value of the poem and sometimes mark the directness of the satire that the poem carries. The following examples from the text highlight these aspects of Mago's poem:

Did not king Claudius
Wallow in incestuous bed
Who knelt and prayed
For the protection of his crime? (15)

The rhetorical effect of these lines gets heightened due to the rhythmic nature the poetic and the arrangement of different elements. In the same way, the phrases like 'Holey Prayer Industry' 'The Agent of a Traditional Deity' 'The Devotee Deity' 'The Weak Willed Devotee' and 'Holey Prayer Industry' have a musical element in their recitation and are satirical in nature.

Another important feature of Mago's poem includes a reassertion of popular images of people, places, experiences and practices undertaken in the name of religion. These images, in fact, form simulation of media generated images of these elements highlighting spurious and polluted nature of real spiritual content of religion. This aspect of Mago's poetry marks its proximity with imagists' assertion that poetry is thinking in images. The imagists emphasized the role of imaginative construction of

images whereas the formalists treated arrangement of these images more important in a work of art. The formalists believed that images and poetic elements exist already and the role of a poet is simply to introduce a new order of their arrangement: "Poets are much more concerned with arranging images than with creating them. Images are given to poets, the ability to remember them is far more important than the ability to create them".(Shklovsky, 1986: 53). However, the role of individual perception is significant in the conception, perception, creation and their arrangement in a new order. This arrangement often results in a reassertion of the available images, particularly in satirical poetry. In *A Holey Prayer* the readers are already familiar to the images used. The images of devotee deity, disciple deity, and of those associated with specific sects or practices evoked through suggestive indicators like :

Sure of his false station
He teaches how to live?
How to breathe? How to sigh?
How to cry? How to shy? (p.41)

create a specific effect due to their reassertion for the purpose different from the one already established. . The readers quickly and easily recognize the people behind these images that bring the satirical import of the poem with greater impact.

This assertion of images brought out through metonymic references evokes multiple associations and a host of allied meanings get conveyed simultaneously as in the following examples:

The agent exhorted me
To say prayer holey
And pay for penance
With ritual galore (p.17)
and
Another suggests
To feed a black dog
With a baked bread in butter
Before the sunrise on every Tuesday (p26)

The very mention of words like 'pay for penance, To feed a black dog' relates these expressions to superstitions, blind faith, commercial nature of religion in a satirical way.

The purpose of satirizing different aspects of corruption that has destroyed the real essence of religion makes the poet involve a shift in

perspectives. Instead of limiting the poem to the expression of guilt complex suffered by the protagonist and expressed through the use of personal pronoun I that tends to make the poem individualistic, the poem marks an extension to such experiences in general. It introduces a very subtle shift in the poetic structure that involves a change of role making the interlocutor turn from a participant to a participant observer and then into an objective observer. This shift appears in the form of the poetic persona's indulgence in the act of reporting different happenings. The panorama of images presented in the poem depicts various scenes exposing clever strategies of unholy minds to befool the people and pseudo saints claiming to be Gods and Deities. The change of focus from narrative I to the third person weak-willed Devotee identifiable with the I and then to the third person pronoun 'He' in Part V and the mixing of points of view allows the speaker to expose hypocrisy, sham, falsehood, and degeneration informing people's understanding and treatment of religion that turns it into another kind of political affair:

The deities politely stress
That political turncoats
Convince the rulers that be
To ignore crime to be in the chair (p.27)

As people involved in politics shift their loyalties for greater material gains, people now practice religion in the same way and for the same purposes.

The commercialization of religion, its deterioration at the level of an entertainment concert and the way people are attracted to follow these practices has been awarded an amusing and ironical treatment by Mago. All these elements have functional utility in exploiting people's beliefs:

Hired hymn singers
Drown the guilty murmurs
In the loved music
In a holy carnival (p.31)
A devotee deity decorated
With flowers of crisp currency
And devotees of shady streak
Dance to the agent's musical note (p.31)

The observations in this form become a potent means of satire that includes variety of practices concerning this false show of religion. In the process, it also shifts the focus of satire from the false deities, pseudo saints, agents and those who earn money in the name of religion to people's

own weaknesses that make them willing preys of these vultures. The people themselves lack real understanding of religion and ignore its spiritual nature the expected and deserved result is :

Now devotee deity is the God
Hymn is the God
Holy prayer is the guise
For the sleaze and material greed (p. 33)

It also implies that instead of changing their own ways of life to adopt sacred behavior, people tend to make religion what they consider to be convenient for them. Consequently, religion gets substituted by the people's own aspired goals. Religion is now more a matter of worldly success and pleasure than spiritual bliss. In such a scenario a total misplaced sense of values prevails:

The devotee deity demands
Total surrender
And blind devotion
And allows a life of laissez faire (p.31)

The poet makes pointed references to people's own weaknesses and lack of moral and spiritual strength that has resulted in the present situation informing religious degradation of humanity:

The agent flourishes like Caesar
And big because we are small
He dictates for we obey
That makes master and slave (p.19)

People seeking Godly help in matters like "fear of possible mishap, remedy for some disease, success in business, job and monetary benefits turn out to be weaklings likely to be exploited by the cunning minds. The recurrence of similar words, phrases, expressions and words marking the weaknesses of the people responsible for these developments indicates the poet's own sense of anguish and disgust over such thoughts of the people. It can be realized from the repetition of almost the same lines quoted above (p.19) at page number 65 again :

In fact Caesar is not great
We are weaklings
To make someone a hero
Is our compulsive necessity. (p.65)

It is in the form of almost a direct admonishing that the poet expresses his sense of anger, pain and rejection of these practices:

Where is the need
 To awaken the soul
 When they are happy
 In their physical being (p.44)

All these aspects of religion satirized in the poem acquire greater significance as they serve a greater purpose of upholding the value of religion as such. In other words, the satire in the poem is not against religion, it is rather its misunderstanding and malpractices it has been subjected to by the people. Therefore, the poet makes fun of the people indulging in irreligious and mundane activities in the name of religion with the view to highlight spiritual understanding of religion making it more of an individual rather than a social activity.

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Rediscovering Gandhi's Ecological Vision in An Era of Environmental Crisis

*Dr. Vineet Mehta**

The Chernobyl disaster, Bhopal gas tragedy, increased arms proliferation, frenzied deforestation, frequent oil slicks, accelerating urbanization, hysterical plunder of natural resources are all pointers to an ecological crisis knocking at our doors. In an age of over-consumption, where man is getting increasingly lost in the muck of greed, enslaved by technology and bedazzled by the idea of comfort, Gandhi's ecological principles and holistic vision can show the way for sustainable existence.

This paper aims to present Gandhi as an ecological thinker whose entire life could be interpreted as an ecological treatise. Though, the term 'ecology' never figures in the speeches and writings of Gandhi, and even the *Encyclopaedia of Human Ecology* edited by Julia R Miller et al. (2003) omits Gandhi as one of its entries, yet Gandhi comes across the most vociferous critic of industrial-modernity and techno-scientism.

Ecology as a science of human relationship with the environment is rooted in the 'economies of household management.' It is the economy of lifestyle that Gandhi put into practice in his living. Gandhi did not try to distinguish between his personal and public life at any point in time; he conveyed the value of conserving resources for the future generation. Contrary to the culture of hoarding and self aggrandizement promoted by capitalist-modernity, Gandhi advocated a utilitarian lifestyle that puts minimum stress on the environment.

Contrary to compartmentalization of different spheres and disciplines promoted by western modernity, Gandhi recognized the interrelationship between various disciplines and spheres. As Vinay Lal avers, ". . . ethics, ecology, and politics were all closely and even indistinguishably interwoven into the fabric of his thought and social practices" (*Empires* 139). JC Kumarappa, reflecting on this attitude, remarks: "In the traditional archives of knowledge, religion, sociology and economy have all been reserved their separate and exclusive spheres. Man has been divided into various watertight compartments. The left hand is not to know what the right hand does. Nature does not recognize such divisions. She deals with all life as a whole" (4). Gandhi realized the ecocidal potential of heavy machinery and capitalist-industrial-consumerist culture.

* Associate Professor, PG Department of English, Doaba College, Jalandhar

In his writings, particularly the *Hind Swaraj*, Gandhi attacks heavy machinery because he knew how technology can snipe and cut off human bonds with the natural world. He favours technologies, like the Singer sewing machine, because they sustain communities and promote culture of conviviality. According to Shiv Visvanathan, Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* is an "an intensely naturopathic document" that seeks to further harmony between man and nature.

Gandhi comes across as the staunchest practitioner of ahimsa or non-violence that was aimed at establishing harmony with the environment. His entire life can be written about as an ecological treatise. Gandhi once famously remarked, "I do not want to live . . . at the cost of the life even of a snake" (Lal 250). From a number of biographical sources, it is evident that he was quite willing to share his universe with animals and reptiles, without rendering them into objects of pity, curiosity, scorn or amusement. Gandhi was resolutely of the view that nature should be allowed to take its own course. Arne Naess has written that he "even prohibited people from having a stock of medicines against poisonous bites. He believed in the possibility of satisfactory co-existence and he proved right" ("Self Realization"). Arne Naess, associated with the Deep Ecology movement acknowledges the profound influence of Gandhi on him. From Gandhi, Naess learnt that the power of non-violence could only be realized after the awareness of "essential oneness of all life" (cited by Rosenberg xix)

Gandhi transformed the 'idea of waste' and rendered it pregnant with meanings – inverse of the meanings invested in it by European representational regimes. He also was one of the most vociferous critics of western modernity. Gandhian philosophy and ideals of ahimsa and satyagraha continue to guide many environmentalists not only in India but also in many other parts of the world. The principle of ahimsa (non-violence) is one of the greatest contributions that the Indian thought has offered to the world. It proposes and promotes universal love and respect towards all things— animate and inanimate. The word ahimsa is a combination of the Sanskrit word "himsa" with the negative prefix "a," usually translated as non-violence. "Ahimsa" means, ". . . not injuring any living being, whether by body or mind" (CWMG 346). For Gandhi, ahimsa, in the positive sense, means "the largest love," (CWMG 346) exercised boundlessly and extended to the entire creation. Gandhi turned ahimsa into a dynamic force, informed by truth (satya). Ahimsa as a potent force proactively engages in the promotion of non-violence, and achieves its various social-political goals through activities grounded in nonviolent

means. Thus, ahimsa can be understood as the outward symbol of the inner truth force (satyagraha).

In the present times the silencing of nature, and the ecosystem people, is quite conspicuous in a metro-centric, modernizing India. In such a scenario, dominated by the borrowed Western paradigms of capital resource intensive development and linear growth, Gandhian minimalism can offer viable, sustainable alternatives. Gandhi's call for agrarian economy and minimal technology, which does not put stress on the environment, can offer viable alternatives to modern, consumerist culture. Gandhi was deeply conscious of the ways in which frenzied urbanization is ecocidal, and further springs up issues of economic-environmental inequity. Gandhi famously remarked, "Wildlife is decreasing in the jungles, but it is increasing in the towns" (Lal 139).

For Gandhi, modern civilization is based on a flawed view and it suffers from several basic and interrelated limitations. Gandhian view on techno-scientific-consumerist culture can be summed up as:

- (1) It lacks moral and spiritual depth.
- (2) It has no guiding principles which help it to get out of a life devoid of meaning and purpose.
- (3) It creates violence.
- (4) It reduces wisdom to rationality. (Jahanbegloo)

Gandhian philosophy has been adopted by various environmentalists to highlight alternatives to linear development models and techno-scientific modernity. Gandhian philosophy has inspired a galaxy of India's best known environmentalists including, Sunder Lal Bahuguna, Chandi Parshad Bhat, Medha Patkar, Vandana Shiva, Anna Hazare, Pandurang Hedge, Pandurang Shastri Athavale and many others. Such "Crusading Gandhians" (Gadgil 107) strictly follow the principles of ahimsa or non-violence and Satyagraha in organizing mass struggles against monopolization of forest, land, water. Dr. Christopher Chapple observes in *Hinduism and Ecology*, that in addition to these well-known environmentalists, there are hundreds of smaller voices spread all over India that make it the home of the biggest environmental movement on the planet. Gandhi's influence is also quite conspicuous on the most popular and spectacular uprisings against the commercial exploitation of forests in the postcolonial world called the Chipko movement. Chipko, which literally means 'hugging the trees,' was sparked off by the government's decision to allot a section of the forest land to Symonds, a sports company. The fear of the usurpation of their

forest land by the rich industrial houses, and also an impending threat of marginalization and displacement, led the local peasantry to launch this popular environment movement. The Gandhian influence on this indigenous movement was profound as a Gandhian organization—Dashauli Gram Swarajya Sangh (DGSS), was on the forefront of this agitation. The agitation that initially started in Alakananda valley spread to eight districts of the present day Utrakhand. Chipko demonstrated the resilience and folk wisdom of “Crusading Gandhians”(Gadgil 107)

Gandhian philosophy with its focus on minimal need based consumption and acceptance of minimal technology offer viable alternatives in the present scenario of toxicity created by technology overuse and pollution due to overconsumption of resources. Gandhi observed:

the great Nature has intended us to earn our bread by the sweat of our brow. . .I venture to suggest that it is the fundamental law of Nature, without exception, that Nature produces enough for our wants from day to day, and if only everybody took enough for himself and nothing more, there would be no pauperism in this world, there would be no man dying of starvation in this world. (CWMG 225)

It is important to note that Gandhi was not against science but its misuse or abuse; he was not against technology but against man's enslavement by it. In many ways Gandhi personified a true ecologist whose practices were examples of ecological living worthy of emulation.

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Reflections on Social and Moral Imbalances in selected Indian English Novels

*Dr. Barinder Kumar Sharma**

Indian English literature has gone through various phases in thematic concerns in the last hundred years. Before partition, Indian English novelists such as Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao, R. K. Narayan, laid more emphasis on patriotism and nationalism as a primary concern but their concern for freedom of man from the social mal- practices and maintenance of human dignity in the conservative outlook and prevalence of inhuman and discriminatory customs also remained under focus. Indian social set up too came for critical evaluation because of its blind following of many outdated and irrelevant set patterns of moral and social behavior of life. Such a system left a very limited breathing space and sphere for people to think fresh and achieve social and moral equanimity with freedom. In that kind of a scenario, the chances of liberation and free thinking seem minimal. And man feels helpless before such caste based and economic yardsticks of social and religious hierarchy.

Man is a very enigmatic creation of nature on earth. Knowing fully well that man is mortal; he has been busy in amassing maximum wealth and power. Not only busy in usurping maximum wealth but he ironically attempts to expand in such a way that he secures for his future generations. Such an attitude which descends from the philosophy of supremacy of the domineering and their companions remained central factor which never lets the common people a breathing space to remain peaceful and easy going. Because of this, the human history has undergone multitude of wars and conflicts of ideas. And civilizations of the world kept changing through various phases of historical periods. These attitudes were the grounded reasons for the creation of clash of cultures leading to the emergence of multiple castes and class based discriminatory distinctions. This human set up will never reach a stage where one can say all are equal, selfless, prosperous, peaceful, civilized and humane.

Mulk Raj Anand was the first novelist who spoke against the caste based exploitation of the poor and the underprivileged people. Such a system continued for centuries and took a form of economic exploitation by the haves of the have-nots. Untouchable of Mulk Raj Anand is the finest example of suppression and exploitation of human freedom under the garb of harsh frozen idealism which deplores the victimized human psyche.

* Associate Professor, P.G. Department of English, B.U.C. College, Batala

Anand shapes his anger against the prevailing social rules which blatantly undermine the human dignity. A young boy Bakha is confused to understand the double standards of the society. He wants to retaliate against such which norms which make him feel less than an animal. But his father Lakha who has acclimatized to the prevailing harshness of the society wants his son to follow his example of submission to the existing system. Lakha's words forewarn as well as make him realize the reality of life, "We cannot do that. They are our superiors. One word of theirs is sufficient against all that we might say before the police. They are our masters. We must respect them and do as they tell us. Some of them are kind."¹ Mahatma Gandhi's vision of future India after independence makes him hopeful of better life in the coming years.

Kamala Markandaya's *A Nectar in a Sieve* reveals the miserable plight of women in Indian social set up in which women are always at the receiving end. Rukmani, wife of a poor farmer, does her best to maintain her domestic harmony in spite of her husband's moral and economic degeneration. Her daughter Era is forced to prostitution because of the callous and difficult circumstances created by industrialization and male dominated society. Basing her novel on the theme of 'east-west cultural encounter', Kamala Markandaya shows that people of the east seek spiritual and economic equanimity through sacrifice at physical and mental level. In her novel, *Possession*, she again brings out the exploitation of the poor by the established. Rich people think that they have the capacity to buy the talent of Indians. But in this novel, Markandaya brings out the theme of colonialism. She shows the futile efforts of an English lady who represents the imperialist representative woman who hold the opinion of possessing the Indian spirit. But her efforts receive a big blow when her efforts come to naught in the end.

Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* raises the conflicting dimensions between individual dreams and social and moral restraints. It also underlines the efforts of persons who want change in the age old taboos and manmade moral and social laws. How far these laws of restricting human freedom and aspirations are justified is another question to which the novelist endeavors to probe into? She tries to find out the answers of fundamental questions which emanate from man-made social laws. Her effort of writing the novel is to reveal the genesis of human struggle which "... Really began in the days when the love laws were made. The laws that lay down who should be loved, and how. And how much"².

Roy appears struggling in duality of optimism as well as pessimism at the same time. Her narrative is a credible and critical commentary on

the uneven social set up where she doesn't bring any concrete and viable remedies to the target section bundled in the vicious circle of conformity with smoldering but upcoming agitation. But at the same time, she is encouraged to find that persons like Ammu, Mammachi, Rahel and Velutha making valiant attempts to break the established social and moral bondage and illogical and oppressive laws. In pursuit of the fulfillment of their dreams, they overlook the repercussions of their non-conformist attitude. But Roy's pessimism seems breaking her nerves when she observes that hypocrites, economically and politically strong persons still are the usurpers of power who overwhelm the administration and police mechanism and cleverly use them to their vested interests. Her dismal conclusions give pains to the readers when she opines that established rules and social taboos are so strongly established that the exploited remain exploited and victims remain victims in spite of drastic changes in legal remedial system even after the introduction of Indian constitution.

It is basic human feature that every sensitive person runs after respect and dignity as per his status and achievements. In *The God of Small Things*, there are some miserable characters who struggle in getting due regard and proper recognition. They may be somewhat responsible for their plight and sufferings but more than that are the social and moral systems which make them too vulnerable and fragile to be as victims rather than culprits. Innocence and good nature act against their decisions and become the cause of their bad luck. Ammu, daughter of Scientist Pappachi and an artist and versatile business lady Mammachi, is a person of strong will power. Her efforts of breaking the social and moral laws to make her life better fail miserably as she couldn't visualize the inherent strength of patriarchal and discriminatory social structure of Indian society.

Feminist issues vehemently attract opinions of legal and human right experts and activists. Despite the enforcement of laws and constitutional provisions, cases of domestic violence, psychological tortures and moral taboos, very thin allowances are seen being made toward the suffering lot. The questions taunt the implementation at many levels. Seema Jain avers, "...it reveals how a patriarchal and phallogocentric system, women having no *locus standi* are oppressed, marginalized and made to suffer (e.g. Ammu, Ammu's mother and Rahel). Sometimes, they tend to derogate their own sex and co-operate in their own subordination (e.g. Ammu's mother and Baby Kochamma) because of their having unquestioningly and unconsciously, internalized values of the patriarchal system (e.g. Mammachi, Ammu and wives of Kathakali men).³

Many women like Ammu are stuck in social and moral dilemmas as they can't find immediate solutions to their problems as they alone have

to fend for themselves. Her faithfulness prevailed upon her to decline the nasty and sinful idea in spite of the dangerous consequences of her defiance. She had thought that the decision would be taken as a valiant step but contrary to her expectations, nobody, either in the house or in the society, tried to probe into the matter. None appreciated her courage and extended any support to make her morally strong. Rather, her own father expressed his doubt over the version given by her daughter. Her father's faith remained intact shattered Ammu. Pappachi continued his belief that all English men were of very high moral character, "Pappachi would not believe her story- not because he thought well of her husband, but simply because he didn't believe that an Englishman, any Englishman, would covet another man's wife" (p.42). Had Ammu succumbed to the desires of her husband, perhaps she could have continued as publically respected wife and have forestall the arrival of many of her social and economic problems. How ironical does it look that a divorcee lives (in spite of her chastity) with a moral and social stigma. On the other hand a morally deprived lady receives public respect with her hidden corrupt reality. Ironically, Baby Kochamma did her best to win over her lover Father Mulligan; a young Irish monk. As nobody could decipher her moral corruption and degradation, she remained very sober and decent public figure in the house and society. About Baby Kochamma's affair with Mulligan, Roy writes about the intensity of infatuation for each other in spite of its being unconsummated. The priest was infatuated by her, "trembling kissable mouth and blazing, coal-black eyes" (p.23), and she feels enslaved by the thrilling promise in his, "effulgent emerald eyes" (p.24). Unfortunately, such expressions are not the luxuries of the unprivileged and the prohibited persons like Ammu and Velutha.

Mammachi is the other miserable person who fails to achieve moral and economic equanimity despite her dominant position in the house and her business inclination and enterprising talent. Throughout her married life she did not attract desired place in the family from her family members particularly from Pappachi and Chacko. Continued mal treatment at the hand of her husband did not bother her sensitivity. She did so as she was fully aware of her lot as it was a common feature of a helpless Indian wife. In spite of merciless physical humiliation, she remained calm as is done by typical Indian wife. The consequences become more tragic when such scenes are witnessed by children. In *The God of Small Things*, actions of such parents put very negative impacts on Ammu (when as child) who had been witness to such seem involved between her father Pappachi and mother Mammachi, "As a child..... Ammu had learnt very quickly

to disregard the Father Bear beat Mother Bear stories she was given to read. In her version, Father Bear beat Mother Bear with brass vases. Mother Bear suffered those beatings with mute resignations” (p.180). Roy presents a very strange behavior of Indian husbands who are made of dual personality having - public as well as private faces.

Pappachi and K.N.M. Pillai too have such nasty duplicity in this regard. Sri Benaan Johm Ipe or Pappachi, who had been Joint Director, Entomology at Pusa Institute, Delhi, posed very enchanting, somber and civilized facets of his personality to all visitors. He was lavish in donating money to orphanages and clinics of physically deprived people. He always did his best to prop up his public image as a cultured, philanthropic and man of ethics. Seema Jain truly observes Mammachi, “...when at home with his wife and children, he would become a monstrous bully and beat them in the same inhuman and callous manner as the illiterate and unsophisticated Kathakali men beat their wives. Ammu would spend cold winter nights in the garden of her Delhi house because Pappachi would beat her and Mammachi (Soshamma) and turn them out of their home”⁴. Similar attitude is seen in the behavior of K.N.M Pillai, a self-styled champion of human rights and human dignity. Being a political leader of Communist Party of the town, he instructs the others to respect human dignity and maintain equality amongst all human being. But contrary to his sermons, the picture of his own house in dignity of women is quite contrary to his public propaganda. He treats his wife shabbily as untouchables are treated.

Arundhati is very sarcastic in her portrayal of high caste Syrian Christian families of South India. She shows the plight of women whose life is no way better than that of untouchables at the grass root level of Kerala. As high caste women suffer at the hands of physically and economically powerful counterparts- their father, brother and husband, the untouchables undergo the same suffocation and oppression under the garb of social norms and caste based hierarchy. Similar offence committed by two males coming from two different communities does not get similar punishment as it is interpreted differently from the perspective of caste based scales. The caste and economic yardsticks are taken into consideration while rewarding and punishing criminal offences. When Chacko’s physical intimacy and exploitation of the low caste women working in the ‘Paradise Pickles’ is brought in the notice of Mammachi, she rubbishes it putting lame excuses but Ammu’s secret affair with Velutha is taken as a bombshell shaking the roots of the ‘Ayemenem House’. Mammachi cannot tolerate the physical intimacy of her daughter with foul

and dirty untouchable, “Then she shuddered as her schoolgirls shudder. That was when she said: How could she stand the smell? Haven’t you noticed? They have a particular smell, these Paravans” (p.257). She spits on his face and issues him a threat of elimination, “Out! She had screamed, eventually. ‘If I find you on my property tomorrow I’ll have you castrated like a pariah dog that you are! I’ll have you killed” (p.284).

The untouchable Velutha, like Ammu and Mammachi, is another victimized character who too is born to suffer. In spite of his intelligence, good behavior, mechanical acumen and political linkages, he meets the tragic end. Velutha’s dilemma of life is quite similar to Ammu’s predicament as the former is marginalized due to his caste and economic class whereas the latter is in misery because of her gender. Roy describes him as “The God of Loss. The God of Small Things” (p30). He is an angry young man who intends to break the old shackles of social taboos of various kinds. To make his struggle strong against the caste riddled system, he dares to join Marxism and becomes a regular member of the communist party. Ammu’s brave act of falling in love and Velutha’s active involvement in Communist party’s road procession are part of the movements of Feminism and Marxism which focus on cultural and economic transformation aiming to stop the exploitation of the poor and helpless who are the marginalized since centuries. But unfortunately, Velutha and Ammu are betrayed by their own confidants - Velutha by K. N. M. Pillai, his father Vellya Pappen and Estha and Rahel whereas Ammu by mother Mammachi, Baby Kochamma and her brother Chacko. In fact, Roy tries to prove that in the modern callous world, other than relations and affiliations, economic and personal interests too overwhelm human actions and decisions.

Notes and References

1. Mulk Raj Anand, *Untouchable*, 1935; rpt. (New Delhi: Orient Paperbacks, 1970), p.109.
2. Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*: India Ink: 1997, p.33. All other textual references have been cited from this edition and page nos. has been given in brackets.
3. Seema Jain, Arundhati’s *The God of Small Things*: A Feminist Perspective, *English Journal*, ed. N. K. Neb Jalandhar :Pragati Educational Council , Vol.6 No.1, p.44.
4. Seema Jain, Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things*: A Feminist Perspective, *English Journal*, ed. N. K. Neb , p.46.

Catherine Bourne as a New Woman: A Feminist Perspective of Hemingway's *The Garden of Eden*

Dr. Virender Singh*

The emergence of first representatives of sexually liberated, free thinking woman in American literature who comes to be known as 'New Woman' took place in the 19th century literature. Hester Prynne in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, Mrs. Larue in John William De Forest's *Miss Ravenel's Conversion from Secession to Loyalty*, Celia Madden in Herold Frederic's *The Damnation of Theron Ware*, Edna Pontellier in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*, Nellie in Stephen Crane's *Maggie* are all strong women who design a code of conduct for themselves that is free of the prescribed gender roles and sexual restraints of traditional society. Ernest Hemingway is a witness to and a major participant in the broad cultural struggle of his time especially the rise of modernism and the gender war.

Catherine Bourne in *The Garden of Eden* is represented as a newly married woman with vibrant imagination, yearning for creative outlets, desirous of sexual adventure, increasingly marginalized by her husband's career and a tendency toward suicide. She feels trapped within the limitations of her gender and commits seemingly destructive acts, an act of re-vision, in Adrienne Rich's sense: "If the imagination is to transcend and transform experience it has to question, to challenge, to conceive of alternatives, perhaps to the very life you are living at that moment . . . nothing can be too sacred for the imagination to turn into its opposite or to call experimentally by another name" (*On Lies, Secrets, and Silence* 43).

Her various experiments, termed as madness, challenge the very categories upon which we base our identities: race, gender, and nationality. The blurring of these categories has historically been at the very heart of various cultures' greatest conflicts and fears: dread of miscegenation and homosexuality, wars over national borders, struggles to define male and female domains etc. Catherine wishes to inhabit the unstable territory between binaries – a place that breeds extreme tension, anxiety & insecurity.

As a New Woman, Catherine acts as deconstructionist. It means she reads her culture in a way that rejects universals. She believes that one's identity is an invention, not a cultural given. Much of the novel's

tension revolves around her desire to prove that gender identities are dynamic and fluctuating. Her destructive activities like burning David's manuscripts, inviting Marita into their life, and playing the role of a boy; all show her larger desire to subvert fixed notions of gender identity, an effort she shares with many other literary women of the twentieth century. In short, Hemingway has created a New Woman in its extreme form through the character of Catherine Bourne.

Throughout the novel she is under pressure to behave in a normal wifely role. This becomes a source of frustration for Catherine and she says: "Who said normal? Who's normal? What's normal? I never went to normal school to be a teacher and teach normal. You don't want me to go to normal school and get a certificate do you" (*The Garden of Eden* 33)? Catherine, tortured by definitions of normality, is anxious to break beyond uniformity to find a place where her less constrained, personal identity can emerge. Feminist theorist Denise Riley argues in her book "Am I That Name?": Feminism and the Category of "Women" in History that women, as a group, can have unique experiences but she contends that these experiences in and of themselves do not define womanhood. The category of "woman" is an unstable, fluctuating state of being that can be willfully performed, unwillingly imposed by one's body or imposed by another individual. Hemingway has shown that there exists a rift between discursive representations of woman and individuals' experiences of their own identity from moment to moment. If we conceive of Catherine Bourne as a New Woman who accepts her identity as a woman but at times detests the socially imposed category of "woman" then her self-dividedness, her bursts of rage, her desire to enact forbidden sexuality, and even her decision to burn David's manuscripts can make sense and gets logically explained.

It is not that Catherine despises either herself or other women; rather, she despises the category of women that defines her as hysterical, passive and weak. To get rid of such impositions she embarked on a series of gender transformations with the hope of liberating herself from the codes of female behavior. She simply wants to establish a world without gender stereotypes within the confine of her marriage and says to David: "We're not like other people" (27). Catherine is skeptical about David's ability to imagine a world devoid of stereotypes. He doesn't seem particularly imaginative in his conceptions of her as a woman; she is either his "good girl" or "Devil." When she proposes the idea that they can be equals, he expresses strong reservations: "I want us to be just the same" (Catherine Says). "We can't be the same," "Yes we could if you'd let us." "I really

* Assistant Professor, Department of English, Govt College for Women, Lakhna Majra, Rohtak, Haryana

don't want to do it" (176). Catherine repeatedly decries the standards of normalcy that determine male and female behaviour: "'Why do we have to go by everyone else's rules? We're us.'" "Why do we have to do other things like everyone does?" (27)?

Catherine finds the publicly constructed David abhorrent in the same way she finds cultural constructions of woman abhorrent. She wants David to know that she married him for his authentic self, not this culturally powerful identity that exists in texts. And perhaps, more importantly, she wants David to act on the same principle in his affection towards her. "Please love me David the way I am. Please understand and love me" (17). She says so hoping that he can move beyond static definitions of "women," "wife," or "bride" to find in her a more complex and complete individual. Catherine wants to explode the notion that gendered subjectivity exists as a single, coherent and unified entity but her husband's public career works in total opposition to that notion. The clippings construct a static and commoditized author-figure: "There were hundreds of clippings and every one, almost, had his picture and they were all the same pictures. It's worse than carrying around obscene postcards really. I think he reads them by himself and is unfaithful to me with them" (215).

David, in fact, has usurped Catherine's role as the cover girl: fetishized, sexualized and commoditized. And yet there is a difference. Unlike mass media images of women and the devaluation that lies therein, male authorship and authority still carry privilege and power. From Catherine's perspective, David's interest in these cultural constructions of himself stands in direct opposition to her project. He reveres the cultural image of masculine authority that perpetuates itself in the public sphere and she strives to destabilize such monolithic texts.

As Catherine becomes increasingly aware of David's dividedness, she too becomes torn between her role as a "good girl" and her desires. She tries to ease his mind by proving that she is committed to the role of wife: "I've started on my good new life and I'm . . . looking outward and trying not to think about myself so much" (53). Submissive, dutiful and accommodating, she attempts to live according to the standards of wifeliness. After a short time, she cannot sustain such a divided self, and pleads with David: "Do you want me to wrench myself around and tear myself in two" (70)? She begins to feel even more desperate once she realizes that their gender role reversal is having only a limited and temporary effect. In an ingenious plan, Catherine sets up a kind of puppet regime in her marriage by importing a girl named Marita to fulfill the obligations of

a "good wife." As such Catherine gains the space to breathe freely and acts out her own desires without feeling self-conscious about her lack of enthusiasm for the wifely ideals.

Catherine, as a New Woman, is intolerant of any limitation and, therefore, attacks the very texts that enable David to strengthen his role as a powerful cultural producer. David in turn not only abandons Catherine but also spends his time with the conventional and good girl, Marita. He thinks: "Tomorrow he must go back into his own country, the one that Catherine was jealous of and that Marita loved and respected" (193). Marita respects the writerly world by simultaneously reverting it, maintaining distance from it, and encouraging David to become even more entrenched in his own manhood. She prods: "I want you to have men friends and friends from the war and to shoot with and to play cards at the club" (245).

Catherine's refusal to embrace a unified and socially acceptable form of female sexuality has now become intolerable to her husband, the ultimate arbiter of her success or failure. His stiff response, "Go to sleep, Devil" literally puts to rest the possibility for her to explore and develop the diverse aspects of her own identity within their marriage. As a result Catherine Bourne burns the very foundation of David's cultural identity like Bertha who in Bronte's novel *Jane Eyre* takes her revenge upon Rochester in a release of primal rage, rebellion and destruction. As though making an allusion to Bronte's novel, David says to Marita: "We've been burnt out . . . Crazy woman burned out the Bournes" (243). The burning of the stories by Catherine indicates stripping David of his former authority: "He had never before in his relatively short life seen impotence but in an hour standing before the armoire on top of which he wrote he learned what impotence was" (442).

We can appreciate Catherine's activities more favourably if we allow the narrative to conclude where the manuscript leaves off. It also raises one question: what precisely was Catherine's failing as a wife? The narrative reveals one more difference between Marita and Catherine in their nighttime reversals: Catherine, as a New Woman, has insisted on being a boy and, therefore, the dominant partner while David was forced to position himself as a female. Marita, on the other hand, allows David to retain the position of dominance; he remains in the male role, and she positions herself as a boy, presumably the submissive role. Catherine's failing as a wife, therefore, is the result of the fact that she wants to be equal in marriage where the husband cannot relinquish his dominance. In the end, David finally acknowledges his responsibility for the destruction

of his young wife: "His changing of allegiance, no matter how sound it had seemed, no matter how it simplified things for him, was a grave and violent thing" (238).

Moreover, the New Woman qualities of Catherine resemble those of Hemingway's wives. Michael Reynolds has shown that in 1922 Hemingway wanted to let his hair "grow to reach the bobbed length of Hadley's so they could be the same person" (Hemingway: The Paris Years 98). In *A Moveable Feast*, Hemingway says he and Hadley "lived like savages and kept our own tribal rules and had our own customs and our own standards, secrets, taboos, and delights" (4). During his later courtship with Pauline, she repeatedly remarked "we are one, we are the same guy, I am you" (Kert 186). Mary Welsh's autobiography explains that she (Mary) had always wanted to "be a boy" and loved Ernest to "be her girls." Moreover, in a handful of letters, Hemingway nicknamed himself "Catherine" and referred to Mary as "Peter." Only his third wife, Martha Gellhorn, seems to have refrained from the gender experimentation Hemingway enjoyed with his other three wives.

Carlos Baker has rightly said that Hemingway's New Women can be grouped as: ". . . deadly females. Their best-realized (because most sympathetically presented and most roundly characterized) representative is Brett Ashley. The horrible example would presumably be someone like Margot Macomber . . . these women are selfish, corrupt, and predatory. They are bad for the men with whom they are involved" (The Writer as Artist 110). To encapsulate, this type of female figures are found throughout the whole spectrum of Hemingway's work and he has portrayed them so minutely and elaborately that it's not possible to miss any chance to appreciate them as the representative figures of his times.

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Post-Colonial Approaches in R. Parthasarathy's Poem 'Exile'

*Dr. Sarvesh Kumari**

The most reassuring thing about the past is that it happened. (From "Exile", 75)

Past has ingenious and insidious ways of reaching present and future through its invisible yet powerful tentacles. It resists fading away without leaving traces. It is these traces of the colonial era that make the past of the colonies touch their present – their language being one of the most important traces. English came to India with the East India Company and stayed when they left, as it had taken roots in the soil of the country. Moreover, it remained a privileged language. In fact, it is not just a language in India. For the powerless it is their passport to power – a guarantee of better job prospects and upward social mobility. This is not the case just for India. Phillipson states that English is promoted as a panacea for economic and social problems at both the nation-state and individual level (27). Thus, after decolonization became a reality from being just a remote possibility, English was welcomed as a positive force that democratized the nations and empowered the powerless. But then, the coin has two faces.

Said's fusion of Foucault's discourse theory and Antonio Gramsci's thoughts on hegemony have heavily theorized the area of thoughts related to the effects of the colonial domination over the socio-cultural structure of the peoples who were colonized and hegemonically controlled through the colonial discourse, defined as a coordinated set of practices, primarily linguistic, that aimed at the "management of colonial relationships" (Hulme, 2). Moreover, it also became the presenter and represented of the non-European world to Europe. Gone are the days when orientalism held the sway. Neo-orientalism rose from its ashes. The stance is present in even the native writers and poets, either consciously or unconsciously. The images of India that Rajagopal Parthasarathy's poems present are not unilaterally flattering. They also have the rampant poverty and filth in them that orientalism loved to show as a dominant trait of the colonies. Thus, Parthasarathy confirm the image of the other constructed by the Orientalists: "A grey sky oppresses the eyes: !porters, rickshaw-pullers, barbers, hawkers, !fortune-tellers, loungers compose the scene (from "Exile", 76).

* Assistant Professor, Department of English, (DU)

[Note: All the lines from "Exile", "Trial" and "Homecoming" have been taken from Ten Twentieth-Century Indian Poets.]

Said had pointed out how socio-cultural programming is embedded insidiously and invisibly and how it is maintained with the application of "power political... power intellectual, power cultural [and] power moral" (874). Gramsci states that the "whole fabric of society" (276) is imbued with the hues of social programming through coercion or hegemonic ideological control. Postcolonial theory sees colonial discourse's main propagating force – its culture, e.g. literature and philosophy – as means to social programming. This programming is severely questioned in the scenario arising out of the development of the postcolonial discourse that squarely posits itself against its predecessor – the dominant discourse of colonialism that left its permanent marks on the modern, postcolonial societies. "One significant aspect of the modern world has been the impact and legacy of imperialism, colonial territorial acquisition and control" (Low and Wolfreys, 200). The societies, under the power of their imperial masters, made transition to some form of modernity in a hybridized manner, while they retained their ancient traditions to some extent. Language was a key area of contest where various forces contend to gain cultural ascendancy. Using a language which is not one's mother tongue is not very conducive for the flourishing of one's creative faculties and for truly quenching one's thirst for knowledge, argues Parthasarathy obliquely when he writes: "School was a pretty kettle of fish: !the spoonful's of English !brew never quite slaked your thirst" (from "Trial", 78). Here he tries to make a statement, not only about a language, but also about the futility of any attempt at coercive imposition of language use as it is sure to fail. The natural processes of social growth and acquisition of linguistic competence are very unstructured and un-designed in their own un-chaotic manner. One's natural choice happens to be the path of least resistance that is taken by any individual acquiring language skills and getting socialized: "Hand on chin, you grew up, !all agog, on the cook's succulent !folklore" (from "Trial", 78).

One's roots are deep. That's why transplanting takes a long time and a lot of effort on the part of the transplanter of cultures: in this case, the colonial powers and their successors. Hegemony is perpetuated through ideology that is culture dependent. Gloria Anzaldua asserts that culture is the reason why we perceive reality as we do. "Dominant paradigms, predefined concepts that exist as unquestionable, unchallengeable, are transmitted to us through the culture" (888). An obvious question arises

in response to this: If our perceptions and intellectual processes are heavily determined by our respective cultures, from where comes socio-cultural interrogation? Descartes had the answer when he had asserted cogito ergo sum (I think therefore I am). The doubting part of the mind is actually that part of human existence which proves that one actually exists. It is this doubting part of mind that questions the obvious and attempts to look beyond it towards the limpid pool of truth. The colonial discourse provided an array of control factors that could be targeted for opposition after the hegemony of the colonial power was done away with.

This explains the propensity and predominance of the interrogating attitude in the postcolonial discourses. Socio-cultural interrogation finds a place of pride in the postcolonial discourse and Parthasarathy's poems strike home with their apt observations and valid inferences drawn about the master-subject power play: "It's no use trying to change people. They'll be what they are" (from "Exile", 75). He presents the crumbled empire, the state of the erstwhile powers and the aftermath of decolonization with accuracy when he asserts that "An empire's last words are heard on the hot sands of Africa. The da Gamas, Clives, Dupleixs are back" (from "Exile", 76). His irreverence seeps out of the membrane of his poem, intentionally or unintentionally. It may also be the proverbial postcolonial reaction, an expression of angst or simply what goes on in a desolate exile's mind when Parthasarathy observes the finality of impotence of our colonial master race: "Victoria sleeps on her island alone, an old hag, shaking her invincible locks" (from "Exile", 76). This image of the Empress is incongruent with what the tradition of the colonial discourses had firmly established in more than two centuries of domination. Although the right to interrogate such socio-cultural constructs was hotly contested but the actual process had always been acting, albeit unnoticed or silenced. After a long colonial domination and the resultant marginalization, with power concentrated in the hands of the colonial powers and directed upon the colonial subject all the while, the subject was in a very knowledgeable position to take an interrogating stance on things projected as naturalized through practice and our poet does the same. The coin has two sides to it. The counter discourse to the resistance of the subject race's assertion of national identity is present in his own poems as the question an exile is asked.

Parthasarathy feels like a fish out of water in a foreign land and a sense of loneliness overwhelms him. The confidence he enjoyed with his Tamil language is gone. An introspective study makes him realise the futility of his dreams about England and that brings the disenchantment with his

early English Utopia. There is something to be said for exile:

"you learnt roots are deep,
The language is tree, loses colour
Under another sky."

If you love your country, he said, why are you here?
Say, you are tired of hearing about
all that wonder-that-was-India crap.
It is tea that's gone cold: time to brew a fresh pot.
("Remembered Village")

There are no honest answers to the question that can satisfy rationally, but there are many things in the world of emotions that logic has never heard of. Therefore, the reply is characteristically illogical, yet sound: "But what wouldn't you give for one or two places in it?" ("Remembered Village"). The postcolonial discourse addresses the relationship between the erstwhile subject population and the culture and language of the countries that were their colonial masters whose traces remain even after they left. Kolkata is presented as "the city Job Charnock built" (from "Exile", 77). The problem for a modern creative writer who is using the language of their masters is not a very simple one. Parthasarathy too, faced the situation.

Two of Parthasarathy's concerns have been what he feels to be the lack of an Indian English and the lack of a tradition in which to write whereas most writers depend on tone and the various social and cultural associations of words. Indian English poets may feel they are working in a foreign language cut off from such roots. (King, 234) As a solution to this problem, he chose Tamil over English for his original work and as a source language from which to translate into English. Thus he became a part of the long running tradition of Indian English poets that began with Michael Madhusudan Dutt, the IE poet who abandoned English to write in his own language – Bengali. Parthasarathy "initiate[d] a dialogue between himself and the Tamil past" (King, 234). Doing thus, he became a part of the larger debate of regionalism versus assertion of the postcolonial national identity. "In its specific regionalism Parthasarathy's poetry might be said to express Tamil rather than Indian nationalism" (King, 234). Even then, in the context of the postcolonial discourse, his assertion forms a part of the range of reactions available to the erstwhile subject nation. His poems are indicative of that stage in the life cycle of the postcolonial discourse when the subject successfully asserts his identity and his claims to the master's language and literature. Parthasarathy himself explains in his

preface: "In attempting to formulate my own situation, perhaps I stumbled upon the horns of dilemma. From the beginning I saw my task as one of acclimatizing the English language to an indigenous tradition (9)." The poet is conscious of the hiatus between the soil of the language he uses and his own roots.

Parthasarathy admits in his Preface to *Rough Passage*; "Even though I am Tamil speaking and yet write in English, there is the overwhelming difficulty of using image in a linguistic tradition that is quite other than that of my own (9)." He advises Indian English Poets to return to their respective linguistic traditions. In this he is similar to the writers like Soyinka and Achebe from the continent of Africa, who react against the forced homogenization brought about by the hegemonic control of the forces of globalization and seek to go back to the oral indigenous tradition. This counter current in literature is a part of the larger post-colonial discourse. English being the language of the colonialist forces from whom their countries had won freedom painfully, these writers passed through three stages: unquestioned acceptance and imitation, partial questioning and alteration and rejection and creation of new forms of literature that they had inherited from their colonial masters. They are not the sole representatives of their countrymen or culture. They only represent a set that has chosen one way. The other set with different choices has writers that are "de-rooted and have to cure this handicap through 'a cultural imagery,' trying to overcome their fear of not belonging anywhere and nowhere. The writer adopts a caricatured identity...as 'World's Citizen,'" (Boneza).

Art, in all its forms, has always been a product of human mind processes, and the mind processes aren't totally independent of the effects of the stimuli coming from the world out there. Human actions are affected by their milieu - social, political, economic and cultural - and affect the milieu in their turn. Thus, literature has a reciprocal relationship with the people and systems of its own time and before and after it. The degree and extent of the circles of influence in which the production, dissemination and reception of literature fall have been changing in types and radii with the changing times. In a span of less than a hundred years, the world and kind of literature it produces have undergone a sea change. Parthasarathy's journey from English to Tamil and then towards an assimilation that can house both symbiotically is indicative of a globalized world that is coming out of the shadow of its colonial past, giving birth to an international literature.

A close look at Parthasarathy's poems will reveal the assimilation of heterogeneous cultural indicators at work. Past and present cultural impacts fuse to generate a future that has a place for both. In the life of an exile the cultural indicator of India, Ravi Shankar, shares space with the products of the western civilization: "cigarette stubs, empty bottles of stout and crisps" (from "Exile", 75). Although it is not a synthesis and the co-habitation is uneasy and short-lived in this specific instance, yet, it directs one towards a solution of sorts. It conceals in itself one of the many dimensions of a possible future of the erstwhile subject in the postcolonial era.

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Redefining Classicism: Characteristics, Values and Influences

*Dr. Manpreet Kaur**

Literature in connection with its past and present history studies the human mind, individually and collectively. Any account of a nation's march in bygone times reveals to some extent its mental characteristics, some pulsing of its social, political and economic life, of dreams and ideals, its imaginations and its other complex inspirations. Then what does it mean to call something classic?

The term classic implies to that special age or antiquity when the material is somehow different and valuable and therefore classic. The material somehow shapes what comes in later time periods as classical. When, literary scholars refer to classical literature, they usually mean that this literature is widely acknowledged as having outstanding or enduring qualities.

Looking at the splendid fabric of classical English Literature, we realize in it a "coat of many colours," for it is shot with the varying tints of racial characteristics. On the route maps of classical literature, "the making of English literature has gone the prismatic fancy of the Celt, the somber passion of the Teuton, the golden gaiety of France, Scandinavian greys, Italian purples and linguistic debts of Greece, yet for its composite character it is not a thing of patchwork quality, but a fine harmonious blend of all into one."

The Saxon Classic genius is clear and intense, with a certain fierce simplicity and bleak directness, whereas the Celtic imagination is iridescent and exuberant, subtle and pervasive, allusive and mystical. The Age of Chaucer was essentially an age of unrest and transition. In the religious world there was a serious outburst of unorthodoxy. The most insistent characteristic of the period is of impatience and progress. Free access to the Bible was what the spiritual life required. The leaven of the Renaissance was already at work. Assuredly, a writer of the period wrote lyrics, composed music and a confidential note started to be expressed on the subject of science and philosophy. The first complete version of the Bible in English was made in 1382 by Wyclife and Good Translations from which the Classics also made their appearance.

* Associate Professor & Head, Department of English, Khalsa College for Women, Amritsar.

The drama, incomparably the greatest force of the medieval times, inspired the grandest poetry as well as the sweetest lyrics. It gave variety, flexibility and clarity to prose. The exigencies of drama demanded word picture that should conjure up clearly and vividly the scene suggested, acting demanded the eloquent exhibition of elemental emotions and swift transition of mood, individualizing demanded nice distinctions of diction. Philosophic reflection, poignant introspection, joyousness of heart, agony of spirit were uttered in the drama for intensity of expression and also made for its extensity. The insatiable spirit of adventure; the master passion of love and hate, ideals of beauty; the greatness and littleness of human life gave reality to the characters in the famous plays of the age. Use of blank verse consisting of lines, each line ending with an accented monosyllable and standing by itself was altered to suit the context.

Shakespeare's plays "stood out all appeals." Almost every phase of the life is mirrored, from the particular craze and fashion of the moment to the broad, general characteristics of the national life. Shakespeare was fully alive to the necessity of dealing with familiar themes. An astute borrower, with a ready eye for a good plot, a skillful reader of the public; a gentle, sensitive, sensuous and somewhat melancholy man, Shakespeare was of his age and shall confirmedly remain of ages. The eager, the inquisitive spirit that flamed up at the renaissance also expanded itself in novel, prose and essays. Francis Bacon's style exhibited simplicity and strength to English Language. He introduced the method of induction: arguing from ascertained facts to principles. Time has confirmed that his ideas are still applicable and genuinely classic.

Ben Johnson's most conspicuous feature is his realism- extremely coarse and direct reflection of his intellect; he attacks vice and folly. In opposition to the free Elizabethan romantic structure, Johnson stood for and deliberately intended to revive the classical style though not all the classical practices were applicable to English plays. He observed unity not of action alone but of time and place as well, sometimes with serious resultant loss of probability. His use of blank verse is strong, compact and powerful though sometimes suffused with passion. John Milton is an outstanding poet of the Puritan Era. Variety, flexibility and lyric passion are the qualities of the Elizabethans but in loftiness of thought, splendid dignity of expression and rhythmic felicities Milton has few peers.

About the middle of the seventeenth century a change began to come over the spirit of English Literature. This change is due to no mere fluctuation of literary fashion, but is deeply rooted in the flux. The

classicism was fostered and encouraged by the political needs of the age. A brilliant set of writers in France actuated by the classical methods elicited a profound influence over European Literature. It became the vehicle of attacking the political happenings of the age. The creative imagination moved onto the primal human qualities; concerned with the interpretation of human nature. The new spirit is critical and analytic, not creative and sympathetic; it brings the intellect rather than the poetic imagination into play. Poetry was starved of emotional sustenance. The main factors visible are:

1. The academic aspect was the substitution of Classicism for Romanticism.
2. The political aspect was due to the general influence of France and the specific medium the King and his courtiers used.
3. The psychological aspect underlay the change of attitude. The Great Plague and the horrific fire numbed the public imagination.
4. The social aspect was that the coffee houses multiplied and had their distinctive clientage. They represented the schools of wit and dialectics. The houses united great writers in a masonic brotherhood. The term that best exudes the spirit is Romance and Romanticism. The birth of Romantic age is the emotional tide which ebbs and flows throughout the literary history; the high-water mark in the age of Shakespeare and Wordsworth, yet taking on so varying a complexion in the works of Marlowe and Scot.

Romanticism, generally speaking, is the expression in terms of art of sharp sensibilities, heightened imaginative feelings that influenced many art forms and left its mark in Philosophy and history. Walter Pater makes a very suggestive remark: "what is classical comes to us out of the cool and quiet of other times," as a measure of what past experience has shown us. The essentially classical element is the quality of order in beauty in a clear degree.

Order, clarity, tranquility are obviously classical qualities. The Romantic Revival was the result of no single cause. It was the inevitable corollary of the Renaissance and Reformation. The characteristics that make Romantic literature Classical are:

1. The subtle sense of mystery-it is a complex emotion compounded of awe in the presence of the unknown, wonder in the presence

of the known, and the exquisite response to manifestations of beauty.

2. An exuberant intellectual curiosity is an increased sense of awe, wonder and beauty. In short, an illumination of the imagining faculty.
3. An instinct for the elemental simplicity of life. The classicists emphasized the dignity of man as man and dwelt upon the transcendent power of human love. The reaction against the complexities of civilization, insistent in the growing life of teeming cities was marked and new attitude towards nature developed. Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Emerson, Thoreau express this fervour in their writings.

Romanticism of the age had, of course, in common with every great movement definite limitations of its own. It was essentially a school of ideas, of splendid generalization. Little attempt was made by its exponents to apply their ideas to the concrete problems of the day; it harped on man rather than a reconstruction of that life in its reaction. It too readily accepted what was primitive, wild, strange and picturesque, as the essential glories of life. Matthew Arnold, a classic poet and critic pleads for classicism as opposed to romanticism. Although he ignored or belittled much that was valuable in romanticism, he has pointed out its defects and weaknesses as a movement. He exposed the exaggerated importance attached to the Middle-Ages and the "grotesqueness" and "irrationality" of much literary medievalism. "He saw just as clearly yet with more sympathy, the tendency towards eccentricity, formlessness and lack of balance encouraged by romanticism; and held that excessive devotion was harmful since England was the native home of intellectual eccentricity of all kinds." He held that "the peculiar effect of Nature resides in the whole and not in parts." To him classicism is "calm, cheerfulness, disinterested objectivity." One of the most important legacies of this classical spirit was the spirit of disinterestedness, of self detachment.

We see that the Romantic spirit exhibits itself unmistakably in all genres of literature, history, science, philosophy, art and faith of time. Throughout the study of classicism we find that its spirit never leaves, but flows from century to century- continually re-asserting itself around the globe in thought, in action, in speech and in letter. The modern or the new movement also bears resemblance to the Romantic revival that quickened our sensibilities and involves a closer correspondence of Art

with Nature. But if the general resemblance is considered, there are particular differences that give it a distinctive character of its own. There is always a rhythmic flow in literary fashions and ideals but history, despite the adage, never repeats itself, though historical conditions do. No sunrises are ever the same. Some of the special characteristics of the present day tendencies in life and letters are:

1. Its reiteration of the old Revolutionary formula of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity in a new setting.
2. Its worship of Power rather than of beauty-different from Romantic and Victorian Era.
3. It's challenging attitude of the older values in Art and Life.

Literature needs to be reinforced with fresh vitality, with new vigour. If there is more force and sincerity than beauty, it is because these are the much needed qualities of the modern literature and contemporary writers. We are far too near to unwanted horrors of wars etc. We lack perspective and necessary detachment and deliberation that is essential to the making of a great classicist.

The literature of tomorrow lies in the womb of today. What the precise character of that literature will be, it would be folly to try and forecast; but assuredly, every action, every attitude of ours today, is helping to mould the nature and destiny of these unborn children.

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“Speaking the Unspeakable : Child Sexual Abuse and the Role of Parents” in Mahesh Dattani’s ‘Thirty Days in September’ and Vijay Tendulkar’s ‘Ghasiram Kotwal’

*Seema Rani**

Parents play a major role in how their children turn out. It is rightly said that ‘Like father, like son’. Whatever the child observes at home, it has a profound impact on his development as an adult. Parents with a low self-esteem raise children with the same affliction. A theory infers that children raised amidst domestic violence, are tend to develop into hostile and aggressive adults. Parents with good self esteem tend to raise children with more secure self esteem. Parents who succeed in education tend to have children who even surpass their parents’ achievements. They play major role in child’s physical, mental, emotional as psychological development.

In Indian society, parents have full control over their children so they aspire to keep a check on their activities. A child’s abnormal psychic development might be the result of parents’ lack of consideration for the child’s mental and emotional requirements who are required to nurture as well as protect them.

Sexual Violence against women and children has become an insidious problem of alarming proportions. WHO estimates that of 150 million girls worldwide that have experienced forced sexual intercourse, up to 56 percent of girl victims were abused by family members. Children, especially girls, are vulnerable enough to become the victim of sexual abuse easily which has a more damaging psychological effect than rape. In day to day life we come across so many cases of child sexual abuse. All children have fundamental human rights. Violence against children, whether it is physical, psychological or sexual, is a gross violation of these fundamental human rights. The Parents are required to play a much considerate role in handling such an issue. It is ironic that some parents are not even aware of the fact that their kids are exposed to sexual abuse. There are some cases in which the parents themselves abuse their children sexually. Some parents don’t even believe their kids if they are informed about any such happening and take it lightly due to their own low self esteem. Our society being male dominated, makes girls more prone to sexual abuse; at the same time, contribute to their reluctance to speak out about the violence.

* Assistant Professor, Department of English, DD Jain Memorial College for Women, Ludhiana.

The issue of child sexual abuse has remained a lesser explored one in literature. Being a deplorable issue, it is often not highlighted and discussed in literature. Still there are pioneers of modern Indian theatre like Mohan Rakesh, Badal Sircar, Girish Karnard, and Vijay, Tendulkar who expose the flaws and failures of society in their plays. The issue of incestuous relationship before reaching the puberty has been handled deftly by Mahesh Dattani, an Indian playwright of repute, in his play *Thirty Days in September*. He has vividly captured the damaging ramifications of incest on the child's psyche. As a child, Mala suffered continuous sexual molestation by her maternal uncle in her childhood which results into her development as an individual with abnormal sexual behaviour. She herself attracts men to molest her, to 'use' her. According to Mala herself, she likes to be used by men older to her in age. She is even unable to accept Deepak's true love as her uncle's presence haunts her all the time. She holds her mother, Shanta, responsible for her plight.

Deepak really loves her and wishes to marry her but her unhealthy psychological mind is not prepared to handle any relationship healthily. She knows that she won't be able to do justice to the relationship. This becomes quite clear when she is at Deepak's house to avoid her uncle. Deepak tries to console her, to come out of her uncle's shadow. Whatever Deepak says, she hears her uncle speak to her. Whatever Deepak does, he feels her uncle persuading her to molest her. Her uncle had made her feel ugly about herself and made her feel that she herself wants to be molested:

Man (Vinay) : ...Nobody will tell you how ugly you are. But you are good only for this...

Man : You like it! You enjoy it. After four years you have become a whore! At thirteen you are a whore! (pg 44)

Continuous sexual molestation had a profound impact on her psyche. She started doubting herself about her role in being molested. Mala tells her councilor:

Mala's voice on the tape : ...I-I seduced my uncle when I was thirteen! I slept with my cousin-and-anymore who was available...Please help me stop this behavior... (pg 33)

Mala: ...May be I was born that way, may be... This is what I am meant for. It's not anybody's fault, except my own. Sometimes I wish that my mother...

It is because her mind as a child couldn't handle such a complex

issue. So whenever she turned to her mother for consolation, for affirmation, for articulating her physical as well as mental pain, she tried to escape her questions. Mala accuses Shanta of deliberately ignoring her pain when she knew all about her sexual abuse by her maternal uncle. She remained a mere spectator to the destruction of her soul. She busied herself in her 'puja', which according to Mala, was the best medium chosen by her mother to avoid her gaze. She chose to remain silent when she as a child needed her consolation and tenderness the most.

Pretending ignorance her mother rather blamed it on Mala. As like Mala herself, she too believed that it was Mala's own fault and not anybody else's. Instead of accepting the guilt, Shanta rather blames her of being a bad girl since childhood.

Shanta: But Mala, I have seen it with my own eyes. You enjoyed it... (pg 28) She further says that she turned to Krishna so that He may save them from the demon inside Mala, which corrupted her. We find in Shanta, a weak personality. She can't see eye to eye with her own daughter. As a child she could never maintain healthy relations with her siblings. She was termed 'a frozen wife' and left by her husband. Even the 'newspaperwala' and 'gaswala' have no regard for her. But in end of the play she reveals to her daughter that she too suffered molestation for ten long years by the same man, Vinay, at the age of six. She had been the victim of the same fate. Shanta, due to her shattered psyche, couldn't play a healthy role in her daughter's positive psychological development. She could have played a more satisfying role of a saviour for Mala, she could have saved her daughter's destruction from her victimizer; but she herself was weak enough to offer any remedy for the ills. By opting to remain silent, she helped her victimizer and became the cause of Mala's sufferings.

The play ends with a positive note as Mala is shown as finding her identity in Deepak's love. She evolves from her traumatic past life. The play is a mirror to the aspects of society we choose to be oblivious about. It makes us feel one of the most sensitive and traumatic experiences of a human being and understand the confusion that hinders their relationships. The role that the parents must play in handling such a delicate issue is also hinted at. If the mother had played the required role of a saviour; a protector, Mala could have been an altogether different individual. She could have acted more normally. The playwright has done an excellent job in stirring the audience's empathy and educating them at the same time while depicting the women characters as evolving and growing into dynamic beings.

The same theme has been dealt with a slight variation by Vijay Tendulkar, renowned Marathi playwright, screen play writer, essayist, journalist and social commentator. His best known plays are *Silence!* *The Court is in Session*, *Ghashiram Kotwal*, *Kamla*, *Kanyadaan*, *A Friend's Story*. The controversy that rose after performing many of his plays is the clear proof of the unconventional attitude towards solving the human problems. Like most of the contemporary writers, Tendulkar makes his untiring efforts to shed light on the plight of women and young girls in the contemporary society. His play *Ghashiram Kotwal* depicts the girl as a commodity of male gaze and as a victim subjected to physical and mental violence. Unlike Shanta, who remained caused sufferings to her daughter by remaining silent about her sexual abuse, Ghashiram goes a step ahead by handing over his minor daughter Gauri to Nana, the powerful Peshwa of Poona. Ghashiram, crosses all the limits of callousness of parents towards their children. Ghashiram finds in Gauri, an opportunity to attain power and to avenge his insult at the hands of Brahmans of Poona who insulted and lynched him earlier in the play. Nana casts lustful glances at Gauri who is of the age of Nana's daughter. She is so scared of Nana's presence that she says:

GIRL : You are like my father!

NANA : Only in age. But our devotion is—only to this graceful image...Don't lose any more time .Youth will not come again ; the bloom will not last.(He comes close and tries to put an arm around her.) My dear, you are like a daughter to us--- someone else`s.

GIRL : (pulling back) I'm afraid.

NANA : Afraid ? But we feel only love, my dear. Oh ho ho, such shyness, such shyness.(pg 378)

The innocent Gauri is embarrassed by his behavior, feels scared and runs away like a frightened deer and escapes from there. Instead of protecting his daughter, he throws her to the beastly Nana to let him satisfy his lust. Ghashiram signs a 'deal' with Nana and Gauri is sacrificed. She is used as an object of sexual pleasure by Nana and a commodity to attain power, by her father. Gauri is voiceless, powerless and victimized. She silently accepts the dictates of her father. Her exploitation is the symbol of violation of the rights that the parents exercise over their children. A girl child is seen only from the perspective of her sexuality by both her father and her abuser. Nana is full of lust for the innocent Gauri. His comments about a child are condemnable:

Nana : How beautifully formed! What a lovely figure! Did you see? Erect! Young! Tender! Ah! Ho ho! We've seen so many handle so many, but none like that one. None her equal. We wonder who she is. (pg 379)

Nana : What a bosom! Buds just blossoming... We will squeeze them like this! (pg 380)

It is unlikely for a father to listen to lusty remarks made by a man for his daughter but Ghashiram not only listens to but makes full use of Nana's lust towards her daughter as a medium to satisfy his male ego. His male ego overpowers his love towards his daughter. It is moral degradation on the part of a father who wants to use his daughter to grab power. Ghashiram again brings his daughter and offers to Nana. Nana satisfies his lust with the innocent little creature. Ghashiram watches it and feels happy to note that he has succeeded in trapping Nana through sex. Ghashiram, in his quest for power forgets morality and duties of a father. When he finds Nana trapped in Gauri's beauty, he suggests offering Gauri to him, if he is made the Kotwal of the city.

Thus, both, Tendulkar and Dattani are social realists committed to reveal the evils present in the contemporary society. Both the playwrights endeavour to shed light on the vital social issues pertaining to sexual identity, child sexual abuse or gender inequalities which, like termite, is pouncing upon the roots of social relationships. The Playwrights treat each situation deftly which the audience, the readers even the actors can identify themselves with. They tackle reality head-on bothering least about the consequences. They made their characters reveal and expose the hypocrisy of the society leaving the reader or the audience raging with a storm inside which is essential for a positive change to take place for the victims.

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Critical Analysis of Thomas Hardy's Female Protagonists: Feminist Perspective

Varinder Kaur*

The paper dealing with the Critical Analysis of Thomas Hardy's Female Protagonist - Feminist Prospective is an attempt to explore and analyze the agonizing condition of woman living in their traditional oppressive milieu of male-dominated society. The main objective of this analysis is to trace the journey of a sensitive soul from conventionalism to unconventionalism, attachment to detachment, suffering to solace, imprisonment to liberation, illusion to reality, thence from a static role to a dynamic role.

Thomas Hardy's presentation of the pathetic plight of woman in Victorian society offers a feminist perspective of viewing the centuries old exploitation of woman at the hands of men, whether at home or outside. Hardy presents both the extremes-of the domestic woman and of a working (professional) woman, to specify that everywhere the position of woman is endangered and that she is not secure, anywhere. Tess and her mother present the extremes of the domestic woman, subjected to the menial household tasks, living their lives for family, subduing their own passions for being conventionally bound to live under patriarchal authority as their only security for living; while Sue Bridehead and Arabella in *Jude the Obscure* present the second extreme of professionally working women outside their home trying to establish a rapport with men.

The paper also observes another level of polarities in the nature of women protagonists---the accepting and non-accepting. Tess, Izz, Marian, Ratty, Tess's Mother, Mrs. Edlin, accept their traditional submissive role-to suppress their passion and to accept their destiny without raising any question; while Arabella, Sue Bridehead are non-accepting ones, the believers in detachment as the only way to survive. However, the exploration of their lives brings all the polarities of domestic accepting women and the professional non -accepting ones at the same level of suffering their lives of negation the ignorant and rigid patriarchal mindset, getting tortured to the extent of reaching at the brink of chaos.

The feminists hold that man is always flirteous by nature. He always plays tricks on the woman. He treats woman as a toy and never

* Assistant Professor, Department of English, SDSP Memorial College for Women, Rayya

bothers about her feelings, always tries to impose his authority over woman and makes her life hellish. If a woman answers him in the same coin, if she rejects him because of his worthlessness, what is wrong here?

Man-woman has been given equal rights then how a man regards himself superior, how could he dominate a woman? If he flirts with her, he should also feel the same pain on his person. Thus, all the protagonists are portrayed in terrible crises of existence—the crises arising as a result of acknowledging the truth of illusion they had been living in. The vanity of their long wait for understanding, communion and companionship turns their emotional world topsy-turvy and creates a psychic turmoil unbearable to cope with. This harsh reality of wasted life full of nostalgia with no meaning left and no one around to live for and live with, inflict such wounds that, though concealed, burn their soul inside. She is forced to live with such an unbearable pain in utter silence. She is committed to her love for her husband and resolves to lead her life in the manner of self-negation. She never minds to be looking ugly, rather she says: "But I don't care!" "O no -I don't care! I will always be ugly now, because Angel is not here, I have nobody to take care of me. My husband that was gone away, and never will love me anymore; But I love him just the same, and hate all other men, and like to make 'em think scornfully of me!" (p.146) This sense of utter loneliness alienates her from society- the first step in the later efforts of woman to live independently.

Hardy reflects the same transformation of woman from sensitive, caring creature to a 'lost soul' voicing out the agonies of her heart in one way or the other but she fills her with an unconscious strength--probably the strength of--womanhood. Like an injured lioness and wounded she-snake, she becomes vindictive. She could not bear the insult of her womanhood, that too by the man who is actually born to a woman. She acknowledges her rightful position and sets to justify her life. The voice of agony becomes a call for struggle, a revolution to protect her dignity. Finding no other "saviour," she becomes self-protective and self-involved, ignoring and discharging all her conventional duties and responsibilities. She rejects the hostile male-world and sets to re-discover her own identity through the dense fog of hostility and humiliation of male world, earlier crushed and crumpled by man. She turns to life.

The observation sees the painful shriek of the tortured and emotionally injured woman not as depicting her weakness, rather as depicting a hidden volcano of passions, love and desires in a constant effort to burst out, and thus finally bursting and bringing "purgation." Thomas

Hardy's portrayal is not an effort of a woman to list out the sufferings of a woman to draw any sympathy from the man's world. Rather, he empowers his woman by first making her a protagonist, shadowing all men characters and then speaking their problems and predicaments, showing her wise enough to be aware of her neglect and exploitation by men. He gives her power at times and saint-like vision to observe her weaknesses and strengths to rectify the wrong done to her by the patriarchal society. Hardy gives power to his women characters to be "awakened women" and making them aware of their rights in the rigid Victorian Society.

Several critics see this quest of woman for identity, as portrayed by Hardy and the feminist critics as futile. They point out the hollowness of this superficial attempt for empowerment as the patriarchal authoritative and hostile world never accepts and allows this new image of woman as it indicates the threat to their position. Man never accepts the superiority of woman. He gives utmost importance to his male ego and treats woman as subordinate and keeps her at the secondary position. He feels jealous of the progress of a woman. The same futility is also seen in the characters of Hardy. Tess, 'a pure woman,' is seduced in the prime of her life, and finding solace in love of her husband becomes prone to illusions is obvious but she lives with Alec (her seducer) as his mistress for the sake of her family and at the end stabs him to get her husband back into her life. This reveal a contradiction between her conventional heart, longing for relations and their security, and her tragic and pathetic end.

Sue Bridehead, a wavering mind intellectual and a 'revolutionary,' professional woman faces a darkness, a doom over her early spirits and finds herself utterly defeated in love and life; first she enters into a mismatched marriage, rejects her lawful, husband to live illegitimately with her lover, gives birth to his children and goes back again to her husband after the tragic death of her children. This reveal the contradiction between conventional heart and her unconventional way of living a liberal life. It brings out the same futility of her long struggle for emancipation when she remembers the death of her children, although a freedom loving woman and critical of other women being "caged" and living "behind bars," she herself is forced to live the same life of passivity and silence sans love.

But Hardy's woman is a rebel, involved in a self-revolution. Her being a rebel is enough to show her already awakened self. She is awakened enough to be strong in the male dominated world. Hardy's woman is strong enough to endure what cannot be cured. Tess suffers and suffers terribly,

but she endures to live on for she accepts her sufferings in a calm resignation. This passive acceptance may seem cowardly but it has always been a source of great strength. Her spirit of 'acceptance' unmatched. But Hardy gives power to her women characters at time; Tess being a submissive and fatalist becomes a rebel when she stabs Alec. A submissive, tender, and traditional Tess becomes a 'killer' and thus proves her identity. Her volcanic passions burst out and she becomes vindictive to take revenge upon the person who has ruined her.

Sue Bridehead is a rebel who dares to challenge the social norms and resolves to live illegitimately with her lover and gives birth to his children. She is aware of her status as a 'new woman' in the beginning. She dares to violate the traditional setup of the society. People call it 'sham togetherness' and raise their brows at this live-in relationship. Victorian society, being a rigid society, has imposed certain 'taboos' on the women and treated them as a second sex. But Sue shuns her traditional place and she establishes her identity as an "independent woman" denying all the superfluous restrictions upon her person by the conventional and rigorous Victorian society.

Hardy's woman is thus an "emergent woman" and her voice is that of an empowered soul. Her quest for identity has made her reach, at least, 'somewhere' from 'nowhere'; to 'something' from 'nothing' and as 'someone' from 'no-one'. Moreover the revolutionary Feminist identity proved by Thomas Hardy along with the other feminist critics, have proved productive as far as woman in the contemporary society is concerned, who no longer walks behind man. Rather, she has created a place for herself and identifies herself--secure and independent. However I would like to mention here that woman, portrayed by Thomas Hardy, is not a rival to man. She does not want to grab his space but hers is the plea for a new social order where she is not solely dependent on man but could find sources of satisfaction beyond the stereotyped parameters. It is her 'identity' where her interests are not subservient to man but sustaining her new 'self' as a companion. Her prowess is no longer doubted but has been proved. She is being counted now.

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Social Awareness in the Poetry of Imtiaz Dharker

*Dr. Neeraja Malik**

Social Awareness is quite natural in human beings, especially in artists. The higher sensibilities arm a poet with a keen insight to give expression to the prevailing scenario around him. The poets, since ages, have been expressing social awareness which makes literature a unique record of a man's physical and spiritual journey.

Women generally give vent to their personal feelings in their close proximity and the world outside seems to be beyond their ken. Many critics have raised an objection that Indo-Anglian women poets have lacked social consciousness. Sarojini Naidu's poetry does not reveal socio-political turmoil of the contemporary world. When India was burning, she was writing of 'koels' and 'champaks'. She has glorified purdah in "Parda Nashin". The poet has also approvingly referred to Jauhar as practised by Rajput women in defence of their great virtue of chastity. No doubt, Sarojini Naidu was in the forefront among women political activists, yet, her poetry does not reflect any political awareness. Many women poets confirmed the tradition of writing poetry in English but with their increased social consciousness. With a gradual change in the social and political environment, there was a change in creative field also.

Beginning with Kamala Dass and Monika Verma, there is a list of Indo-Anglian women poets, and one among them is Imtiaz Dharker. She entered the literary field with the publication of her first volume of poems *Purdah and Other Poems* (1988). The opportunity of living among three different cultures has enabled Imtiaz Dharker to imbibe the best of each. Her broad outlook on every aspect of life helps her in giving expression to her feelings on various social, political and sexual issues. Her very first book explored multilayered interpretations of the veil. Imtiaz Dharker's life of transitions provides her various themes like childhood, home and loneliness of women. She does not confine herself in terms of any religion or nationality. Imtiaz Dharker has tried to create a sense of self-awareness among her readers. Despite being a Muslim by birth, she has displayed boldness in giving vent to her innermost feelings on the status of women and male attitude towards them all over the world. One can be misled by the idea that whatever she writes is about Muslim women in Purdah and Other Poems. But the reality is that the themes of her poems represent the status of women in any conservative society.

* Joint Director, Department of Higher Education, Haryana (Panchkula)

Imtiaz Dharker's views about Purdah I and Purdah II are quite contrary to the romantic glamorization of "Purdah" by Sarojini Naidu. In Purdah I the poet realizes that the piece of cloth veils not only the body but also the mind of the woman. The protagonist is an adolescent girl from a conservative society who is made to realize that "She was old enough to learn some shame". (P 3) This puts a stop on her natural activities. The elders feel that time has come for her to don a purdah to keep off the enticing eyes. Imtiaz Dharker expresses the feelings of a young girl who is forced to wear veil at adolescence. Purdah II, a sequel to Purdah I, presents the socio-economic existence of women who were earlier made to wear burqa as a measure of safety. The irony lies in the fact that these women are forcibly pushed into such activities. The poet expresses the distressing condition of the girls who sacrifice themselves for the sake of giving pleasure to menfolk. These girls are subjected to cruelties. The women lose their identity and they are just like 'shadows on the streets'. Conflict of identity is merged with understated idiom in her work. The poem also shows the situation when a woman in purdah revolts against such atrocities. The girl who dared to resist the cruelties, ran away to find a better position but she was declared dead by her family. The poet represents all the girls in purdah. It was only the mother of the girl who was sad.

Imtiaz Dharker's second volume of poems 'Postcards from God' (1994) talks about fundamentalist intolerance and extremism. It reveals her increased social consciousness and a wider context. All the poems are written in the wake of Bombay blasts in 1993. She seems to be compelled to express her feelings on seeing the after-effects of the Bombay riots on the society. Postcards from God-I comes from a poet who seems to be deeply disturbed at the current social and religious set-up that has alienated man from man. The poet makes God the persona of the poem and relates the prevailing situation from His view-point. In Postcards from God-II, the poet hints at the material progress made by man. The worshippers of various religions have tried to interpret God's message in their own way to suit their own purpose. God created this universe to provide man a place worth living, but Man created religious, dividing people and making them rivals of one another.

Through the poem, 'Whim', Imtiaz Dharker gives expression to God's regret on having created man in His own image. This is clearly perceptible when the poet writes:

"What was I thinking, of
When I made this?"

In 'Signals', the poet conveys the harsh reality that the modern man has forgotten God. A very short poem 'The Line' conveys that God wants man to live in peace and make progress. The expression :

"I could easily smash it all
and start again"

reveals that it is not difficult for God to smash all that He has created. In the poem 'Wait' she tries to console the readers to wait and see that something will happen and everything will be set right. 'Words Find Mouths' hints at the prevailing political situation which has shattered the basic structure of society. In the poem 'Frame', the poetess shows how believers have formed the image of God according to their own notions. The poet's concern with the growing violence comes out vehemently in each line of the poem 'Monsters Grow Out Of My Image'.

'Pulse' is about the emotional wounds caused by the reckless violence generated by man in the name of religion. 'Prophets in Keds, Under Siege' presents the picture of the world on the brink of disintegration due to immense violence. The lines

"God's houses tumble upward
Shrines burn, stones
And birds plummet from the sky",

indicate that the religious places are being burnt. Believers in one religion destroy the places of other religions. The poet does not hesitate to comment on the political situation all around responsible for the social disorder. "Shell" reflects the lives of the people living under constant fear during violence. People try to do everything for the protection of the family.

The part captioned 'Bombay: The Name of God' contains fourteen poems, all reflecting the poet's concern regarding the spread of violence in Bombay in 1993. The poet is highly perturbed at the effects of these communal riots on the lives of the common people who had nothing to do with any religion. The poet is successful in conveying her feelings at the sight of large scale destruction of articulate as well as inarticulate creations in the society. 'I Speak for the Devil' (2001) is paradoxically the extension of same concerns yet with different extensions and overtones. Though Dharker's concerns are identity, gender, politics, freedom and communal conflict, her varied works show both an extension and departure from the core idea. An added feature of her poetry is that she has given illustrations with many poems to clarify her viewpoint. The situations in her poems point out the social, political and spiritual disintegration that a

woman suffers in a male-dominated society. She also believes that man should not exploit religion to create violence.

For her, art is not propagated for its own sake; it is actually meant to mirror an individual's total social context so that meaningful messages are conveyed effectively.

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The Resonance of Exile in Siddhartha Gigoo's *The Garden of Solitude*

Tabassum Saleem*

Abstract

Exile, whether forced or self-imposed is one of the dreadful experiences to go through and it is in many ways a calamity. The exile of Kashmiri Pandits from their native homeland, Kashmir during the era of 90s in the wake of insurgency, is a bitter saga in the modern day history. The longing for the lost homeland, quest for identity, sense of loss, alienation, and displacement dominates the work of contemporary Kashmiri writers. One such emerging writer is Siddhartha Gigoo, whose debut novel, *The Garden of Solitude*, exhibits the original resonance of exilic experience of Kashmiri Pandits. To foreground the unsung pains of the lives of Kashmiri Pandits in exile, Gigoo creates his self-portrait named Sridar. This paper attempts to study the resonance of exile delineated by Siddhartha Gigoo in *The Garden of Solitude*.

Keywords: Exile, Rootlessness, Identity Crisis, Sense of Loss, Return to Past.

Exile is one of the dreadful experience to go through, be it forced or self-imposed. It is in many ways a calamity for the person who has been exiled either willingly or unwillingly. The concept of exile, which is probably as ancient as human history and one of the oldest topics in the literature of the world, means the condition which puts a person at a physical distance from his homeland, willingly or through the forced circumstances, in a bid for survival and a better life. It may be wilful, a deliberate decision to stay away from the native place or enforced. The former merely results from the circumstances, such as an offer of employment from a foreign country and such instances usually cause little hardships. The latter occurs frequently from a major difference of political disagreement between the authorities of a state and the person being exiled. Often such exiles are helpless victims of circumstances which are beyond the sphere of their influence. Paul Tabori in his book *The Anatomy of Exile* writes:

An exile is person compelled to leave or remain outside his country of origin on account of well-founded fear of persecution or for reasons of race, religion, nationality, or political opinion, a person who considers his exile temporary (even though it may last for a lifetime), hoping to return to his fatherland when circumstances permit but unable or unwilling to so as long as the factors that made him an exile persist. (Tabori 27) The meaning of the term "exile" has undergone numerous changes with time.

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

There are three instances of exilic experiences contained in the beginning of Genesis: the narratives of the banishment of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, the forced wanderings of Odysseus, and the dispersal of Jewish people from Israel which resulted from the destruction of Holy Temple by the Babylonians, “the exile of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, the wanderings of Odysseus, the diasporas of Jews all speak to a fundamental sense of loss, displacement and a desire to regain a paradisiacal sense of unity and wholeness, whether spiritual or secular”(Ouditt xii).

At the beginning of the novel, Sridar is shown enjoying his childhood in his pristine world: a land of peace, mutual brotherhood and unmatched beauty. The serene and beautiful childhood of Sridar portrays the picture of that Kashmir when it was called a heavenly place on earth, where Kashmiri Muslims and Pandits, which form the society of Kashmir, lived together in peace through ages with complete mutual amity. The harmonious merging of Kashmiri Pandit and Muslim communities is shown by the instance when the narrator observes that his grandfather, Mahanandju used to be held in high esteem by both Pandits and Muslims of the locality. But as the wheel of time revolves, the beautiful and idyllic world of Sridar's childhood shatters and takes an ugly turn in the growing atmosphere of violence and insurgency. Terror and violence pervades the whole atmosphere of Kashmir and the people who had lived together for centuries turn hostile to each other. The old harmony transforms into an atmosphere of suspicion. Kashmiri Pandits are given threats to leave Kashmir or they have to perish forever, “The posters on the walls of Pandit houses read: All non-believers and informers are given thirty-six hours to leave this place. Those who fail to obey will be sawed”(40). Targeted killings including both high class Kashmiri Pandits and Muslims are being carried out. Assassinations, clashes between the defense authorities and militants, curfews, fear and terror have engulfed the whole Kashmir. A feeling of terror and fear grips the minds and hearts of the Pandits. Amid this growing terror and menace they start leaving Kashmir for their survival. Soon their flight grows into a giant wave and engulfs Sridar's family too. The scene of trucks carrying the Kashmiri Pandits from their ancestral homeland is the most harrowing scenes of exile. The trucks carry the pain, fear, past, present, culture, belongings, relations, broken links and hopelessness, “each truck carried a home and hopelessness” (66). The narrator also notes that when Kashmiri Pandits are leaving in trucks and crossing Banihal tunnel most people seemed, “speechless as though they had lost their voices” and that “each one had a story to narrate”(66-

67). Being uprooted from their roots, their homes and their ancestral land a feeling of homeless and a sense of loss lurked in the their hearts and the narrator notes, “a sense of homelessness ignited their hearts with love for one another. A sense of loss made them embrace each other and seek solace in grief”(67).

For people like Siddhartha Gigoo, or the protagonist of his novel, Sridar or the entire community of Kashmiri Pandits, this kind of dislocation is extremely painful and unbearable because they have to reckon with actual homelessness, a condition in which they are cut off from “their roots, their past” and their identity too. It leads to denial of what they have grown up with, of being rooted in a definite place and climate, within a network of social and cultural relationships which are crucial for defining their self. It has severed them from access to their homeland, the places that were associated with their ancestors, their cultural legacies, their personal and familial memories and their own sense of pride in belonging to a land so widely celebrated for its beauty, its traditions of learning, its spiritual and religious sanctity. Abandoning their shelter and their means of livelihood for an unknown future they were forced to live the macabre experience of exile. Sridar happens to meet Pamposh, an exiled Kashmiri Pandit residing in the camp that helps him to unravel the tortures he and his peers have to face in the hostile camps of Jammu. The struggle to survive and adapt to the new, hostile surroundings and environment have enmeshed the lives of Kashmiri Pandits. After leaving their native place, other part of the state, Jammu accommodates the displaced community. They get refuge in tents, camps, dilapidated dark rooms and other makeshift arrangements made by government. Herded into nightmare of refugee camps in Jammu, the life and quandaries of the lives in exile are atrocious. The camps in their totality are a living spectacle of dirt, filth and insanitary conditions. They convey the tale of miseries and sorrows that these lives have been encountering inside the cramped camps. The accommodation comprising of a single room regardless of the size of the family has been far from satisfactory. There is lack of basic amenities of life like drinking water, drainage, sewage, proper lavatory facilities and sanitary conditions. Heaps of dirt and garbage are seen strewn around. The foul and stinking smell reigns over the environment. The portrayal of their lives in cramped and unhygienic tents and camps, in virtually subhuman conditions, is a superb piece of portrayal of exilic experience of Kashmiri Pandit community:

All around the camp, there is stench of human excrement and waste. The water in the water tank smells foul, and children lie whole

day in their own vomit. The air inside is squalid... When we are asleep, we cannot even stretch our arms and legs... My mother and sister wash their clothes and the utensils in a puddle of water outside our tent. They line up for hours in the morning to use the makeshift toilet made of torn shreds of canvas, pieces of cardboard and loitering men watch the women wait to relieve themselves. Many women prefer to go to the stinking latrines at midnight, away from the stare of men... (97-98)

Sridar also traces the fact that everyone has gone through the physical and mental agony during the period of exile. The older generation has lost the sense of time and belonging, the younger ones struggle hard to find the means of livelihood in the alienated place and the student work hard to get the education in the hostile atmosphere. Of all the horrors of exile, the plight of older generation is difficult to write about. The exile leaves a deep effect on the psychology of old people. Dementia along with other several psychological disorders becomes common amongst the older members of Kashmiri Pandit community. The trauma of exile makes them unable to reconcile with the new and changing scenario. After losing their homes and their roots people like Sridar's grandfather, Mahanandju and many of his generation who reside in the refugee camp become the victims of identity crisis and consider themselves as men, "without reflection" and who "... had become delusional owing to mental trauma and [their] inability to cope up with the alien surroundings and loss of [their] land" (144).

Being away from homeland, the exiles take upon themselves the task of preserving the memory of their homeland by adhering to the past. For such people the memory of past is richer than the times that are living in and beautiful to be re-lived and to be reflected on. The pain triggered by the exile and impossibility to return, for them, can only be mitigated and comforted by keeping the past inseparable from them. They seek refuge in past in order to provide solace to their devastated souls. Throughout the novel, after the exile of the Pandit community there are numerous examples where narrative is disrupted by recollections: a dream of the lost homeland, of green fields in Pampore, of Sridar's mother and grandmother making apple jams, of his mother sending him to the baker to buy lavasas (bread), and the image of the stained glass in Sridar's ancestral house against the present refugee existence in one cramped room without windows in a barn. Sridar also notes that they are learning "to live life backwards" (85) with "thoughts oscillating back and forth between the past and present" (113). Elsewhere, Sridar's grandfather, in order to escape from the harsh reality of exile, creates a sense of nostalgia and reminding, "the weeping willows, dancing saffron buds, the lush green rice fields and the singing hoopoes" (86).

Sridar does not want that the traumatic experiences lived by his community to get lost in the past. It is also a fact that the account of miseries faced by Kashmiri Pandits in exile remained mostly hidden from the world and very little is known about their life after exile, "the Kashmiri Pandits story did not exist anywhere. The migrants and their stories did not appear in news items related to Kashmir. There were no statistics, no picture of the dead and the dilapidated houses of the Pandits, no record of disease in the migrant camps" (196). Sridar is scared by the fact that his community is on the verge of extinction and will soon be forgotten, "soon we all will forget. Forgetfulness will invade everyone. Collective amnesia will lead to permanent vacuity of the mind"(192). He is driven by the urge to pen down a meta-narrative that helps him to construct the identity of his lost community and to narrate the world the horror of exilic holocaust that befell his community. His desire to write the book of the lost stories of Kashmiri Pandits in exile is in fact the novelist's desire to convey to the mankind the tragedy of Kashmiri Pandits due to exile. The novel ends with the release of *The Book of Ancestors*, Sridar's virtual quest that becomes an exercise in constructing the voice and identity of his community.

Siddhartha Gigoo's novel has become a significant narrative to exhibit the original resonance of exilic experience of the lives of Kashmiri Pandits. Gigoo is a cognizant artist who writes to fulfill some purpose. For writers like Gigoo literature is a prism through which they get the opportunity to project various aspects of exilic experience i.e. rootlessness, homelessness, longing for the lost homeland, loss of identity, struggle in an alien environment etc. In *The Garden of Solitude*, he comes down at the level of the common man and highlights the sufferings of that section of the society which has been rendered least importance in books. Through his work, he illuminates the peripheral identity of Kashmiri Pandit clan by voicing the disturbing details of the life of his community members in exile and thus immortalizes their pain and pangs.

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Regionalism in Amit Chaudhuri's *A Strange and Sublime*

Vandana Rajput*

The word "Regionalism" comes from the root word 'Region' which means an area of a country or the world. Regionalism means excessive attachment for a particular region or state as against the country as a whole. An emphasis is mostly laid on regional locale and characters of that particular area or region and it also includes the characteristic feature of a geographic area. It is a feeling or an ideology among a section of people residing in particular geographical space characterized by unique language, culture, etc. that they are the sons of the soil and every opportunity that exists in their land must be accorded to them first but not to the outsider. Many times regional writers want to present their region to the world and want to bring it on the world map. They use the vivid description of the landscape. They seek to capture the essence of life of a region attempting to capture customs, dress, speech and other local differences.

Regional writings remain rooted to the soil, depicting the true picture of the region. Regionalism is an outgrowth of Realism with more focus on a particular setting and its influence over characters. It coincides with Realism and shares many of the same traits. Some writers and artists began to turn away from Romanticism towards Realism, a literary movement whose writers depicted life as they saw it, not as they imagined it to be. Regionalism developed due to the dual influences of Romanticism and Realism. The concept of Regionalism has been literally well articulated in the fiction of Thomas Hardy, Jack London, Faulkner, and Charles Dickens, R.K. Narayan, Mark Twain, Kate Chopin, etc. The regional novel is generally seen as originating with Maria Edgeworth and Walter Scott. The powerful representation of the regional colour in the novels, the Wessex in Hardy's novels, and the Malgudi in R.K. Narayan's novels has become immortals in the history of literature.

Regional literature incorporates the broader concept of sectional differences within a locale. It was prominent from 1865-1900. Influenced by South Western and Down East humours, between the Civil War and the end of the nineteenth century, this mode of writing became dominant in American literature.

The Indian context of contemporary literature bears an essential relation with the social and political history of our country, which indeed

had marked a breakthrough. Writers belonging to contemporary India are very conscious about their own culture and traditions. Many writers have written about the society or region particularly their own region in which they are born. Writers like Mulk Raj Anand, Arundhati Roy, Vikram Seth, Jhumpa Lahiri, Amitav Ghosh, Amit Chaudhuri, etc. have won international awards and put India firmly on the world's literary map. They focus on each minute problem of the persons living in the society to get recognition. A strong characteristic of regional literature is the sublime influence of regional kathas, fables, stories and myths which later developed as a distinct genre and was termed as 'Regional Literature'. Amit Chaudhuri is one among the known writers, who writes about his region.

Amit Chaudhuri was born in 1962 in Calcutta and grew up in Bombay. He came to Britain to study at University College London and then at Balliol College, Oxford. His novels have won several major awards, and he has received international critical acclaim. Chaudhuri writes about traditional values, his intellectual make-up is western and emotional make-up is Indian but he makes a critical attempt to set the separating line to discover and invent again the alternative tradition and culture in the Indian novel written in English. Chaudhuri himself belongs to the elite upper middle class but he aligns himself with the middle class. What makes him unique as a novelist is his focus on his region though it is doubtful if it can be synonymous with the entire culture of a place, city or a country. He makes his practice as a creative writer quite clear in the following statement: Now the kind of India I write about is a lower middle class or middle-class India, because I write about Calcutta in particular and Bengal, a post-independence Bengal reality, lyricising the experiences of the middle class and the spaces in which they live, I am not writing about a fantastic India. (On Belonging 48)

Chaudhuri is one of the writers who writes for his region, Calcutta and hence can be called a regionalist. His stories have a function locale – Calcutta and Bombay. He has great affection for his both regions. As he was growing he had fascination towards Calcutta to know more about it which can be seen in his novels. Though not grown up in Calcutta he is indebted to his parents for making him constantly think about their old-fashioned belief in the importance of literary culture and society. The tradition and culture of Calcutta have always appealed him. Calcutta is India, Bombay is India and even any locality in these metropolises is India. As a novelist he published his first book of fiction in 1991, *A Strange and Sublime Address*. Chaudhuri is clearly different from most of his

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

contemporaries in that his fiction deals with issues neither related to the destiny of nations, nor with matters of the heart and caste, but with the quotidian minutiae (daily minor details) of middle class Bengali life, of maach- bhaat (fish and rice), doi mishti (sweets and yoghurt).

Among the city novels written by the writers of Indian novelist on different subjects related directly or indirectly to the city of Calcutta, Chaudhuri's novels do have a certain focus on some of the preceding appearance of the present day city of Calcutta. His first intellectual production of fiction is a very short novel (that can be termed as a novella), comprises fourteen chapters with nine stories added to it and these fourteen chapters can almost be read as individual stories. It is the collection of the memories of Calcutta by Sandeep who is the only child of a successful Bombay businessman who comes to Calcutta to spend his holidays with his cousins, maternal uncle and aunt. His trip with his mother is a journey from the silence of his parents' modern flat in Bombay to the old custom and old fashioned household of his uncle (Chhotomama). He has profound closeness for this city as he is born in this city. Moreover, he is curious about everything he comes across and takes interest in every new object. He takes the experience of extreme happiness along with his cousins, Abhi and Babla. The third person narration makes the author to think of everything indifferently. Quite interestingly the novel gives an account of minute details that takes place in everyday life. Firmly rooted in the varied aspects of the habitual daily life, the writer has no good real story to offer. He doesn't know even where to find one or how to structure. He like Sandeep:

would be too caught in jotting down the irrelevances and digressions that make up lives, and the life of a city, rather than a good story – till the reader would shout 'Come to the point' – and there would be no point, except the girl memorizing the rules of grammar, the old man in the easy-chair fanning himself. And the house with the small, empty porch that was crowded, paradoxically, with many memories and possibilities. The 'real' story, with its beginning, middle and conclusion, would never be told, because it did not exist. (48-49)

The word "local" is present in the novels in its many fold aspects, as references to sights, smells, sounds, flavours and collective customs make clear. *ASASA* begins with the words: *HE SAW THE LANE* (2001 a: 5), the capital words focuses on the very first impressions that Sandeep recalls with great inquisitiveness in the countryside atmosphere he expressed in his uncle's house. Small houses, unlovely and unremarkable,

stood face to face with each other. Sandeep sees his close environment, the house of his uncle and the streets of Calcutta, as holding an air of newness, enchantment, or even illusion. Isabel Quingly opines Chaudhuri's *A Strange and Sublime* Address in *Financial Times*, a boy's world is conjured with total credibility, a way of life looked at with some sharpness, some tenderness, some irony... a perfect, small achievement.

Chaudhuri celebrates not only the simple joys of childhood-bathing, eating, sleeping, and exploring the city-but also how the business of living, working, coming to terms with the world of senses. It is very beautifully described that after the children had exhausted all their games, they had bath. It is further explained how Mamima (Maternal Aunt) kneaded their bodies with mustard oil. The narration of the author becomes interesting when he describes the soaking of tamarind and babies. He says: In Bengal, both tamarind and babies are soaked in mustard-oil, and then left upon a mat on the terrace to absorb the morning sun. The tamarind is left out till it dries up and shrivels into an inimitable flavour and a ripe old age; but the babies are brought in before it gets too hot and then bathed in cool water." (8)

When they had had their bath, they went down to have lunch in the dining room. The celebration of simple joys of childhood and the evocations of a way of life forcibly come out in the lunch that follows; it is if he opens our taste buds and the taste lingers long after the lunch is over. Chaudhuri has very beautifully described the cuisine of Calcutta, as fish and spices are the qualities that enhance the taste of food. He has tried every bit to produce that aroma of his region; his novels are full of various kinds of food and food preparations of his region, Calcutta:

Pieces of boal fish, cooked in turmeric, red chilli paste, onions and garlic, lay in a red, fiery sauce in a flat pan; rice, packed into an oven-white cake, slices of fried aubergine were arranged on a white dish; dal was served from another pan with a drooping ladle; long, complex filaments of banana flower, exotic, botanical, lay in yet another pan in a dark sauce.

The novelist catches the comfortable cadences of the everyday routine at 17, Vivekananda Road, uncle's house. Occasionally, this unoppressive routine receives a nudge, usually on Monday mornings, when Chhotomama leaves for work in a cascade of noise and confusion. Various places in Calcutta as Park Street Dhakuri, Gol Park, Gariahat Market, Rashbehari Avenue, River Hoogly, Chowringhee, Castlewood, and a sport shop are described with minute impressions time again. Sandeep doesn't

forget to describe the old-fashioned ambassador car of his Chhotomama and problem caused by it time and again. With the deft touches of a magician Chaudhuri conjures up several ways of spending a Sunday evening:

There were several ways of spending a Sunday evening. You could drive to Outram Ghat, and then stroll with your family by the river Hoogly, watching floating volitionlessly in the air, the steamers in the water, the smoky outline of the Howrah Bridge, like an altar on the horizon." (12-13)

Chaudhuri is very close towards his both region, Calcutta and Bombay and this is very well shown in his novel as well. Sandeep though is away from Bombay but once or twice, he remembered Bombay and felt strangely dejected without knowing the purpose of his unhappiness. Alone in the big apartment on the twenty third floor, he was given the supremacy over the birds and fishes in the flat only and no one else like his cousins. But here, in chhotomama's house, he pulsed into life and passed into extinction according to his choice; he had liberty of doing anything and can go and enjoy anywhere. During these alternating bouts of happiness and unhappiness, when Sandeep felt his equilibrium disturbed, his thoughts would run something like this: 'I wish it were the first day of the holidays and I had just come back from school, and I had just entered my room, and I had just heard we were going to Calcutta.' (27) Chaudhuri's omniscient narration and single point of view is eminently suited to revealing the child's viewpoint. Ironic contrast is another essential tool in the hands of the novelist. This contrast has settled in the very heart of the novel and comes out forcibly in a passage like this and the contrast is between the life of Bombay and Calcutta:

A YEAR AND A HALF passed before Sandeep came to Calcutta again. In Bombay, his father had been promoted to an even higher position in his company. One and a half years after the last holidays, Sandeep and his parents visited Calcutta in the winter. Sandeep felt what a statue in a museum would feel if he suddenly came to life and walked out into a shimmering crowd of people. (82) During these vacations Sandeep's father had also come and the presence gave the holidays a mood of optimism and potential. His father's presence also meant that this time they would be staying at the Grand Hotel on Chowringhee. At such times, Sandeep deserted his parents shamelessly and spent days and nights at the old house with his cousins.

Chaudhuri's remarkable feeling for the texture of place summons up a multi-layered city, a city of stupefying heat, power cuts, a city of insects and mosquitoes, pariahs, beggars and vendors, but with very lovable attitude. The Calcutta of the novel is not the cosmopolitan Calcutta of the elite, Calcutta of multinationals, computers, mobile sets, and cable TVs and so on. It is the Calcutta of the middle class people whose heroism lies in living their daily life. It is Calcutta whose streets are theatres: full of actors and extras: reckless dogs, insufferable cows lying in the centre of the lane, families arguing, old women gossiping, children chasing cats, rickshawallahs idling, Vaishnav devotees singing religious songs for all to hear. As they watched from the car, they were charmed by the illusion, some nagging uncertainty in their minds was soothed into extinction, they briefly merged with his vague, vast enterprise in which everyone seemed to be taking part. (104)

In *Vogue*, John Lanchester observes the novel and says, 'This evocation of the routine, quotidian magic of normality strikes me as an extra ordinary thing to have brought off... mesmerizing.' His novels are full of diverse types of food and food preparations of his region, Calcutta. Chaudhuri, as he tells Galvan, behaves "like a camera" (45). Accompanying Chaudhuri's fascination with region is his fascination with the minute detail of every tit-bit. He has an eye for everything that describes and is related to the life of Bengali middle class, he demarks in his works. As he himself confesses, "I grew up with Bengali and Bombay culture, which was a mishmash of western culture and the local culture." (Galvan, 220) He is actually trying to create micro worlds in which he feels a sense of belongingness and can relate to and have a kind of command on it. For Chaudhuri, Calcutta that he writes about has both physical tangibility as well as specificity. The writer can touch, hear, see and even taste the city. He can record all the sounds one can or cannot hear in the city, the voices of the birds, animals, insects and human beings, the noises of all times of day, very efficiently, and can comfortably distinguish one sound from the other. He has great affection for his regions, Calcutta and Bombay. Both the cities are close to his heart as he was born in Calcutta and brought up in Bombay.

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Rupturing the Episteme: A Sartrean Interpretation of Protagonists in Mahasweta Devi's "Draupadi", "The Hunt" and "Behind the Bodice"

*Ankita Sharma**

Mahasweta Devi's works can be categorised under the "literature of resistance" the purpose of which, according to Sartre, "was not the enjoyment of the reader but his torment. What it presented was not a world to be contemplated, but to be changed" (qtd. in Stern 109). The strength of these stories lies in the final section where the female protagonists act for themselves. In "Draupadi", Dopdi's last act is an act of resistance in which she defies her enemy. She challenges Senanayak to 'counter' (face) her. For the first time, her enemy, Senanayak, feels fear of facing an "unarmed target" (37). In "The Hunt", Mary's last act is the act where she herself administers justice. She doesn't resort to any help but kills her tormentor on the festival of justice. In "Behind the Bodice", Gangor too makes Upin rightfully ashamed of his thoughtless photography which becomes a cause of her gang rape and further leads her to prostitution.

Dopdi is a naxalite activist who stands against landlords' oppression. State officials who are on the side of the oppressors succeed to apprehend Dopdi at the end of the story. She is gangraped. When she is asked to wash and clothe herself to go to Senanayak's tent, she insists on going naked. She turns the terrible wounds of her breasts into a counter offensive and makes a shattering entry into the patriarchal hegemonic structure. In "Behind the Bodice", Gangor crowd comes to Jharoa for work. Upin, a photographer takes her photo when she is feeding a baby. He uses Gangor to make money and fame. Upin gets obsessed with the idea of Gangor's breasts and thinks that they are endangered. His photography makes her the 'object' of police's attention. Policemen gang rape her. Knowing this, her people ostracise her. She has no option but to take to prostitution. She pays the price for Upin's senseless obsession. In the end, she takes off her bodice to reveal the horror of tragedy perpetuated to her by policemen. In place of enticing breasts now remain the torn and bitten breasts. However, breast once an object of eroticism is used in the end to scare Upin who she thinks is responsible for her pitiable condition.

In both the stories, body, the site of victimisation becomes the site of terrorizing the oppressor. This piece of fiction is indeed close to

* Assistant Professor, Department of English, Govt. College, Saha (Ambala) Haryana

contemporary reality. In July 2004, a group of Manipuri women stripped themselves naked in front of the Western Gate of Kangla, where the 17 Assam Rifles are housed. This was done to register protest. The 17 Assam Rifles personnel had picked up old Thangiam Manorama from her house and shot her dead on July 11, 2004. The possibility of rape was also acknowledged (Banerjee 2). Here women used their nakedness as their power and reinvented the accepted sign system. In *Of Woman Born*, Adrienne Rich explains her belief that

female biology...has far more radical implications than we have yet come to appreciate. Patriarchal thought has limited female biology to its own narrow specifications ... it will, I believe, come to view our physicality as a resource rather than a destiny (qtd. in Showalter 314).

Female body, earlier a site of eroticism prone to male oppression is changed by female protagonists to site of repulsion for male violators. The traditional connotations which a female body carries are blown away ruthlessly in the end. According to Kristeva, people are so bombarded by the stimuli of empty images that they cease to feel or respond in any genuine way. Kristeva calls today's society as the "Society of Spectacle" where spectacle means a psyche-numbing representation. She laments the subject's loss of psychic space (see McAfee 106-108). There is a need to subvert some popular media representations of women and create new signifying concepts thus: "Wanting to sit astride a man and mean violence, not desire... Wanting to pull 'pallu' over head and mean anger, not respect for elders... Wanting to let short red skirt fly and be not sexy but horribly repulsive... Breaking down that 'planted' image..." (Banerjee 5). According to existential philosophy, there are two kinds of people. There are some people who refuse to acknowledge their freedom and like to follow determined rules made by others. Such people exist "unauthentically" (qtd. in Stern 77). By denying their freedom, they try to flee from the anxiety of responsibility of making a choice. On the contrary, there are some people who recognize their freedom and consider themselves as free creators of all values. They assume responsibility for their choice. Such people exist "authentically" (Ibid).

Dopdi and Mary can be categorized with those who live "authentically", that is, who do not submit to the hierarchy of values and significances set up in a given society according to set conventions and norms, transmitted by tradition. In our society, the discourse of 'shame' is created around a woman by patriarchy. A raped woman is further looked down upon as having lost her 'honour'. Dopdi refuses to follow the social

code. Dopdi is expected to be ashamed and feel humiliated. Dopdi subverts this discourse of shame and refuses to be judged according to male standards and male gaze. Dopdi blows up the falsely constructed 'truth' with laughter. It can be understood in the Nietzschean dictum of "God is Dead" and consequently the upholding of individualism in values and rejection of absolute values. In a similar vein, Sartre says, "Since I have abolished God, the father, there must be somebody to invent values... Life has no significance a priori. Before you were alive, life was nothing, it is up to you to give it a significance and value is nothing but that significance you are choosing" (qtd. in Stern 82). In existential terms, Dopdi can be categorised as being-for-itself as she is always creating herself. For Sartre, being-for-itself is an ever questioning hollow projected towards future possibilities. Dopdi 'makes' herself into 'something' instead of 'being' something. For Dopdi 'being-for-itself' is basically freedom made manifest because she is able to transcend her raped physical self, thus emerging victorious.

Similarly, in "The Hunt", Mary treads the path not traversed before. She refuses to accept axiomatic truths established in society. She does not accept readymade values. She uses her newly founded concepts to master her life. Even though a tribal, she makes a choice to marry a Muslim boy. Mary denies the sexist codes society imposes and wants women to follow. Mary is depicted as a strong and bold woman who expodes the myth of feminine weakness and docility. She picks and sells fruits from Prasad's orchards in the market. No villager could dare touch Prasad's orchards' fruit because everyone is afraid of Mary. Mary refuses to adhere to female role and submissiveness handed over to women by society. She is bold enough to fight and resist the male hegemony in her life. She resists sexual advances with her machete. She slays Tehsildar, her tormentor during the 'Hunt' festival. Mary's personal subjectivity and agency are sources of dissident identity and action. She does not accept what is culturally given. Mary is a "free agent". She is a 'new' woman with a new perspective. She subverts the traditional gender binaries. Also her culture allows gender subversion through hunting festival. Mary in the end, like her female counterparts, too exhibit power of her sex. The festival where women hunt once in twelve years is rightly made use of by Mary.

All the protagonists in above mentioned stories resist and return the male gaze. The concept of 'gaze' as defined by Sartre usually involves two persons, their relation being governed by power. If a person is in a position of power, the 'other' person he 'sees' appears as a mere being-

in-itself, a phenomenon of nature, not different from all the inanimate bodies he perceives around himself. But when the 'other' person assumes the state of power, it is through his 'gaze' that he reveals himself as a being-for-itself, a subject, a consciousness, a free project, able to transcend itself and all given data towards its own possibilities (Stern 120).

Dopdi resists being a passive being-in-itself in the later part of the sequence. She, by her gaze, changes Senanayak into a being-in-itself, thus limiting his future possibilities, at least for this particular moment. He is changed from a free project into a solidified object. He is congealed by Dopdi into an object which is unable to move in the last scene and stands like an obedient, terrified child before her larger than life manifestation. Dopdi refuses to be judged or being looked at by male gaze. She reverts the gaze by throwing challenge to the whole paradigm which supports patriarchy. She refuses to be evaluated by Senanayak's or patriarchal 'gaze' requiring a raped woman to feel guilty. According to Sartre, "by its very nature, shame is an acknowledgment that I am as the other one sees me" (qtd. in Stern 116). Dopdi refuses to be taken in by this discourse and refuses to be 'seen' by Senanayak. She does not allow herself to be pictured as the 'other' and becomes a being-for-itself i.e. the controller of the surrounding factors, determining them but not being determined in return. In the first phase, the relation due to gaze is that of the oppressor (Senanayak) and the oppressed (Dopdi). But, later, in the narrative, the scales are turned upside down and now Senanayak is being 'seen' by blood shot eyes of Dopdi. Now, Senanayak is turned into an object of 'gaze'. Though Dopdi is the 'other' in the story, she refuses to concede Senanayak the existential priority.

Similarly Gangor's gives a satiric smile to Upin in the end to make him realise the havoc his thoughtless photography has caused in her life. His photography makes Gangor an object of sexual desire for local police who catch her and gang rape her. She becomes an object of patriarchal gaze. Now Gangor takes charge of the situation as Upin is rightfully made aware of the way he has ruined her body and life. Gangor who was earlier an object for Upin's photography no longer remains so. On the contrary, Upin stands terrified and shocked like an object of Gangor's piercing satire. In "The Hunt" too, the so called patriarchal and capitalistic subject, Tehsildar, becomes the object of Mary's rage in the end. Gender binaries where man is supposedly stronger are subverted. Mary an object of sexual desire for Tehsildar, later on, assumes the role of a subject.

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The Urban Neurotic Jew in Woody Allen's Short Fiction

Dr. Neerja Deswal*

Woody Allen is one of the most prolific artists of the twentieth century. He is a highly praised director and scriptwriter, a successful actor, a dedicated clarinetist, an appreciated playwright, and an awarded short fiction writer. His entire work testifies for the efforts he put into creating an easily identifiable style, which never fails to provoke laughter and which distinguishes his work from that of other artists, and into the creation of a remarkable fictional persona, the Jewish New Yorker, the neurotic eccentric, constantly obsessing about love, art, death, the existence of God, the fate of the universe, and the meaning of life. As he is a celebrated film maker, his literary contributions are often ignored. The fictional persona that he created in his movies is very apparent in his short stories as well. It became the hallmark of Woody Allen's entire work, cinematic as well as literary, and proved capable of drawing considerable recognition and identification from his targeted audience/ readers. He fashioned a comedy of ironic, self-deflating juxtapositions, a wit displaying a self-knowing intellect while at the same time mocking the pretence to deep knowledge itself.

Woody Allen, has so far published three books: *Getting Even* (1971) is a collection of short stories; *Side Effects* is an anthology of comical short essays written between 1975 and 1980; and *Without Feathers* (1975) is a collection of essays and, it also features, two one act plays. This book is also one of his best-known literary pieces. It spent 4 months on the New York Times Bestseller List. Most of his literary pieces were first published in *The New Yorker*.

Though not as well known as his films, Woody Allen's short fiction represents a significant part of his work. Woody Allen's short stories, essays, and casual pieces range from parodical philosophical essays to mock-journalistic, and starkly surrealistic pieces, to parodical reinterpretations of hardboiled fiction and other formula fiction types. Although his fiction tackles a wide range of subjects, they all spring from a common reservoir of existentialist concerns and revolve around the absurdity of life and the decadent self-absorption of modern man, the miasmatic awareness of mortality and the subtle perversion of religion, the intractability of romantic relationships, sexuality, morality, and obsessive

psychological pain. His stories are told in one of the most comic dialects known in literature, a dialect originating in Jewish humour, modernized by the syntax of stand-up comedy, and urbanized by the comic tradition of the *New Yorker* short story.

Woody Allen's short fiction is configured as a densely comic exploration of the laden existential concerns which trouble the neurotic urban self. His lively and intense literary style aligns his writing to the tradition of famous American comedians and humorous writers with whom erudition, existential anxieties, psychoanalysis, and sexuality have been domesticated and introduced into mainstream American comedy. He is part of the Robert Benchley and S. J. Perelman lineage that founded and consolidated the comic tradition of *The New Yorker*, and he enriches this tradition by exposing it to the aesthetic exuberance of literary postmodernism. Woody Allen's short fiction brims over with postmodern playfulness and his short stories can be easily used as a guidebook to postmodernist literary strategies. At the same time, his texts are underpinned by a thick layer of references pertaining to the author's ethnic cultural legacy, which he uses for the consolidation of the authenticity of his work.

While the splendid array of film awards is often considered his greatest achievement, Woody Allen's literary skills have also been awarded. One of his best known short stories, "The Kugelmass Episode", published for the first time in *The New Yorker*, on May 2, 1977, brought him the O. Henry Award for Best Short Story in 1978. This award stands for the crowning of his literary efforts. It indicates the exceptional merits of his short story and represents an important critical recognition of his talents as a short story writer. The O. Henry Award was founded by the Society of Arts and Sciences in 1919 and is meant to support the evolution of the art of the short story by annually honouring one English language short story published in American or Canadian periodicals. The O. Henry Award represents an important achievement in a short story writer's career and it places Woody Allen's name on the firmament of the American short story tradition, along with famous and widely appreciated writers such as William Faulkner, Truman Capote, Irvin Shaw, Flannery O'Connor, Bernard Malamud, or Saul Bellow. Some of Woody Allen's short stories have been anthologized in well-known and highly appreciated editions. For example, Woody Allen's name, along with that of Groucho Marx, is mentioned in the section dedicated to Jewish humor of the *Jewish American Literature*. A Norton Anthology. The same section of this

* Assistant Professor, Department of English, Aditi Mahavidyalaya, University of Delhi, Bawana, Delhi.

anthology contains Woody Allen's short story "The Scrolls" as an illustration of one of the best manifestations of Jewish humor in short fiction. The seventh edition of *The Norton Reader: An Anthology of Expository Prose* also includes one of Woody Allen's texts, "Selections from the Allen Notebooks" in the section entitled "Prose Forms: Journals," together with texts and excerpts signed by Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and Walt Whitman.

Woody Allen's cinematic excellence always takes precedence over his literary work, but on a close analysis one finds that his short fiction mirrors a set of factors represented by the immediate literary context of *The New Yorker* magazine, the larger literary context of American postmodernism, and the cultural heritage of his Jewish upbringing. One of the major influences in his writing, the literary tradition of *The New Yorker*, a magazine which has always been the preferred venue for the publication of his short stories. Being published in *The New Yorker* represented one of the greatest literary achievements for the beginning of young Woody Allen's writing career and influenced his writing to a great extent. *The New Yorker* is widely recognised as one of the most prestigious literary magazines for a century now. The magazine has nestled the works of some of the most influential writers of the twentieth century such as Saul Bellow, Truman Capote, Raymond Carver, John Cheever, Milan Kundera, Alice Munro, Vladimir Nabokov, Philip Roth, Salman Rushdie, and John Updike.

For Woody Allen, the acceptance of his texts by the fiction editors of *The New Yorker* meant being offered a way into the most esteemed literary circle of the century and was an important factor in the shaping of his writing. Woody Allen's short stories conscientiously respond to the aesthetics promoted by the magazine. His short fiction is urban par excellence and its humorous qualities are beyond question. It brims over with erudition and catches the atmosphere of metropolitan sophistication. In a very Allen-specific manner, he combines postmodernist techniques and existentialism in what comes to be a mark of his artistic authenticity. His fiction participates in the postmodern dialectics between contestation and reinvention by adopting a deconstructionist attitude, by contesting the value of grand narratives, and by attempting to cope with the dubieties, the disillusionment, and the vagaries of post-war realities through the reconstruction of worlds in a new imaginary register governed by the comic-parodic mode, by irony and playfulness, and by an acute sense of the absurd.

The late Sixties were marked as a period of tempestuous social, political, and cultural changes in American history, closely mirrored by the cultural productions of the age. Sensitive to these social changes, writers had begun to challenge all traditional literary conventions with unprecedented exuberance, striving to demonstrate the contradictions of a world in flux and the fictional nature of reality itself. By placing their stakes on imagined alternatives and ceaselessly shifting perspectives, postmodernist writers challenged the concept of reality, identity, and totalizing truths. Woody Allen's career as a short story writer began under this new paradigm and witnessed the effusion of postmodernist experimentation and playfulness. His short stories can be read as an allegory of postmodernist literary strategies and that his writing closely reflects the postmodern ideology as set forth by Jean Baudrillard and Fredric Jameson. In fact, Woody Allen goes one step further towards exposing the aesthetic perils of postmodernism's willingness to indulge in extreme experimentation and, at the same time, goes one step back, towards the much cherished sense of responsibility and authenticity stemming from existentialist philosophy, which he uses as a binder for the de-centered postmodern universe. Within the larger post-war American literary context, Woody Allen's literary work subscribes to the playful aestheticism of postmodernism and would perfectly fit a Procrustean bed forged by the major theorists of postmodernism, if it were not for the existentialist ethos underpinning his entire work.

In the spirit of postmodernism, Woody Allen's short fiction is able to shape-shift and camouflage under a large variety of literary forms in order to expose literary conventions. His texts often come out as hybrids, stylistic *mélanges*, and triumphs of seemingly incompatible discourses. He actively experimented with style, narrative, and literary genres. Given the author's ability to master postmodernist literary strategies and reflect the ethos of postmodernism to a great extent, his short fiction can easily serve a didactic purpose. Still, there is something peculiar about Woody Allen's postmodernist fictional universe and this peculiarity consists of the existence of a centered consciousness to govern it and of a set of thematic strings which bind it into a surprisingly coherent whole.

To conclude, one can safely contend that, although not as well-known as his films, Woody Allen's short fiction is just as worthy of critical consideration and his stories embody and transform, in his own unique manner, some of the most important forces which shaped contemporary American culture.

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