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**Editor** : **N. K. Neb**  
Associate Professor of English  
DAV College Jalandhar

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### **CONTACT US**

Editor  
Pragati's English Journal, 61\75-A, Garden Colony,  
Jalandhar City, 144003, Punjab, India  
Email: [neb narinder@gmail.com](mailto:neb narinder@gmail.com), [neb narinder@yahoo.co.in](mailto:neb narinder@yahoo.co.in)  
Mobile No.09815884583 Website: [www.englishjournal.in](http://www.englishjournal.in)

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identity and its relationship with the world at large. This novel reveals Desai's tragic vision of life, in which the innocents suffer and they pay a heavy price for their sincerity and innocence, as ordained by an unkind fate.

In *Clear Light of Day*, although the fires of Partition riots burn in the background, Desai's primary interest is again firmly focused on the difficulties facing a woman who attempts to assert her identity within the family framework. Set against the historical backdrop of Delhi before the Partition of 1947, this novel reveals the saga of the Das family, a Hindu clan from Old Delhi. The story begins with Tara's visit to the now run-down family homestead in a suburb of Old Delhi, where Bim continues to live and to take care of their autistic younger brother, Baba. Tara has come to India to attend the wedding of Raja's eldest daughter, an event that Bim is boycotting, having long been estranged from her once beloved brother. "No one said Bim, slowly and precisely, 'comprehends better than children do. No one feels the atmosphere more keenly - or catches the nuances, all the insinuations in the air - or notes those details that escape elders because their senses have atrophied, or calcified'". Accordingly, the serenity and aggravation of the central female character in *Clear Light of Day*, Bim Das, an apparently independent woman who is hostage of her past memories, are conveyed by zooming in on several details of the house where she lives, signifying decay and dullness.

Desai's characters in many novels are members of the Anglicized Indian bourgeoisie, whose marital problems are in the forefront. The generational confrontation in *Clear Light of Day* is echoed in most of Desai's other works from the early *Fire on the Mountain* (1977), which considers the relationship between a recluse grandmother and her granddaughter, to the later novels *Journey to Ithaca* (1995) and *Fasting, Feasting* (1999). In the former, the spiritual pilgrimage to India of a young and wealthy European couple, Matteo and Sophie, is a later version of that of their ageing guru, the Mother, while the latter depicts the struggles of Uma, Aruna and Arun to strike a balance between their parents' expectations and their own personal realization. Typical of Desai's other fiction is also

## 1

## Contemporary Men and Milieu in the Vibrant Works of Anita Desai

Dr. Ruchi Saini\*

### Abstract

This research paper attempts to delineate and outline the revelations of *Contemporary Men and Milieu in the Vibrant Works of Anita Desai*. A number of Desai's works explore tensions between family members and the alienation of middle-class women. Throughout her works, Desai focuses on the personal struggles of Anglicized, middle-class women in contemporary India as they attempt to overcome the societal limitations imposed by a tradition-bound patriarchal culture. Desai has added a new dimension to the contemporary Indian English fiction. She has secured a unique and significant place due to her innovative thematic concerns and deals in her fiction with feminine sensibility.

**Key Words:** Contemporary Indo-English writer, Feminine sensibility, Indian novelist, man and milieu.

**Introduction :** Anita Desai as a contemporary Indian female author has been identified with a new literary tradition of Indian writing in English, which is stylistically different and less conservative than colonial Indian literature and concerns such issues as hybridity, shifting identity, and "imaginary homelands," a phrase coined by Indian novelist Salman Rushdie. Desai is one of the most distinguished Indian novelists, short story writers, screenwriters, and children's writers. Desai is best known for her studies of Indian life and especially noted for her sensitive portrayal of the confidential verve of her female characters. A number of Desai's novels explore tensions between family members and the alienation of middle-class women. Throughout her novels, Desai focuses on the personal struggles of Anglicized, middle-class women in contemporary India as they attempt to overcome the societal limitations imposed by a tradition-bound

\* Department of Humanities, Languages & Social Sciences, Shri Venkateshwara University, Gajraula (UP) India.

patriarchal culture. Set amid the cultural and social changes that have swept India since its independence from Britain in 1947, most of Desai's narratives validate the importance of familial bonds and explore the tensions that exist between different generations.

Desai has initiated her vocation as a novelist in 1963 with the publication of *Cry, the Peacock*, which was subsequently followed by *Voices in the City* (1965) and *Bye-Bye, Blackbird* (1968). Desai's dynamic works engage the complexities of modern Indian culture from a feminine perspective while highlighting the female Indian predicament of maintaining self-identity as an individual woman. This chronicles the morbid dread, descent into madness, and suicide of Maya, a young Delhi housewife who is trapped in a loveless, arranged marriage to the much older Gautama, a misogynistic lawyer. The novel foreshadows several of the major recurring themes in Desai's works—the problems of independence and communication, the influence of the West, and the tensions between religious and domestic interaction. Desai looks in to the reasons for marital discord and illustrates how such discord affects the family. Sometimes, the inability of an individual to be responsive to the behavior patterns of her partner leads to strain and tension in the relationship, while sometimes it is on account of varied levels of sensitivity that strained relationships occur. In this novel Maya and Gautama have strained relationships because of their incompatible temperament. Maya is dreamy, sensitive and emotional, while Gautama realistic, insensitive and rational. Maya is poetic and high-strung Gautama detached, philosophical and remote. Maya has tenderness, softness and warmth, while Gautama is hard and cold.

*Voices of the City* (1965), is a sequence of events about three siblings, Amla, Nirode, and Monisha, and their different ways of life in Calcutta. Amla sees the city as a monster, Nirode sacrifices everything for her career, and Monisha cannot bear her stifling existence in the household of a wealthy old Calcutta family. Set in the late 1950s, *Voices in the City* illustrates Indian society still in transition more than a decade after India's independence from British rule. In this novel, Anita Desai's concern is primarily with human

relationships and how in the absence of meaningful relationships the individual suffer.

*Bye-Bye, Blackbird*, — Desai's first novelistic foray into a country beyond India — Desai reveals the intense *xenophobia* and prejudice that manifested in England during the influx of commonwealth immigration in the 1950s and 1960s. *Bye-Bye Blackbird*, which moves out of India to look at wider postcolonial issues of displacement, is the most accomplished of Desai's early novels. Ostensibly a typical third-world immigrant novel focusing on the lives of Dev and Ajit, two Indians in Britain, and the racial discrimination with which they have to contend, it is ultimately more about the alienation Ajit's wife, Sarah, suffers in her own country following her marriage to an Indian and her changed position in relation to the (British) nation state.

The same as in *Cry, the Peacock*, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* (1975) centers around a distracted wife looking to flee her marriage. The plot follows Sita, a housewife in her early forties, as she arrives on the rustic island of Manori after a twenty-year absence. In the third trimester of yet another pregnancy and convinced that the world is hopelessly marred by cruelty and violence, Sita has returned to the island because she believes that it possesses magical powers which can safely terminate her pregnancy. Nanda Kaul in *Fire on the Mountain* withdraws into a private world of self-willed isolation. Desai has commented on her work: "My novels are no reflection of Indian society, politics or character. They are my private attempt to seize upon the raw material of life." This novel reveals a definite sense of politics to her hitherto essentially family-focused dramas. It is another female-centered narrative that portrays the lives of three women — the elderly Nanda Kaul, her great-granddaughter Raka, and Nanda Kaul's lifelong friend Ila Das — who one by one retreat to Carignano, a small villa in the Himalayan hill station of Kasauli, to escape the brutal patriarchal worlds in which they have each lived.

In *Fire on the Mountain*, Desai reveals the feminine sensibility and a woman's intrinsic aspiration to know herself in terms of not only her relationship with her family but also in terms of her individual

- Gopal, N.R. (1995). *A Critical Study of the Novels of Anita Desai*, New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors.
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the use of the house as a place of confinement for women.

*The Village by the Sea* is the story of a family overwhelmed by misfortune in the traditional fishing village of Thul, on the west coast of India near Bombay. With the mother ill and bedridden and the father an unemployed, abusive alcoholic, the brunt of the family responsibilities devolve upon the elder children, the adolescents Lila and Hari, both of whom have stopped attending school in order to fulfill these duties and care for their two younger siblings. *In Custody* (1984) is Desai's paradoxical story about literary traditions and academic illusions. The central characters are Nur, an Urhi poet, who has fallen on hard times, and Deven. This novel mainly focuses on theme of marital discord and relationship problem. In this novel, Deven and Sarla lead an unhappy marital life. They are quite different from each other in their temperaments. Deven Sharma is a middle-aged man who once dreamt of becoming a poet but later was forced to take a job teaching Hindi in order to support his wife and child.

Based on Desai's own Eurasian heritage but narrated from a male perspective, *Baumgartner's Bombay* concerns themes of alterity and hybridity. The novel—Desai's first to feature a non-Indian protagonist—recounts the tragic life and violent death of Hugo Baumgartner, a Jew who has immigrated to India in the late 1930s from Nazi Germany. The story opens with Hugo's murder and the ensuing chapters alternate between scenes of his last hours and flashbacks that take us chronologically through his life. "Even though his cigarette stank—it was a local one, wrapped in a *tendu* leaf, fierce enough to make his head swim—he could smell the distinctive Indian odor - of dung, both of cattle and men, of smoke from the village hearts, of cattle food and cattle urine, of dust, of pungent food cooking, of old ragged clothes washed without soap and put out to dry, the aroma of poverty" (*Baumgartner's Bombay*, 1988). Hugo Baumgartner, is a Jew who fled from Nazi Germany to India, only to find that he cannot be fully accepted by Indian society either: he is first interned in a camp for Germans during the second world war, and then remains a stranger, in post-independence India.

In *Journey to Ithaca* (1995) Desai sharply scrutinized the temperament of pilgrimage to India through three characters, Mateo and Sophie, young Europeans, and Mother, a charismatic and mysterious woman, whose story is an earlier version of their own. Desai's perspective on India is more European than in his earlier works. This novel focuses on Matteo, an idealistic Italian, and his temperamental girlfriend, Sophie, a hard-bitten realist German. The counter-cultural pair marries in 1975 and immediately set off for India, chiefly in pursuit of Matteo's dream of enlightenment, which has been inspired by his reading of Hermann Hesse's *Journey to the East*.

The various strands that can be traced through Desai's previous nine novels are brought together in near perfect synthesis in *Fasting, Feasting*. In keeping with her earlier novels, there is a return to a focus on the family, and in particular the lot of women trapped in traditional family structures in a rapidly changing postcolonial world. *Fasting, Feasting* contrasted American and Indian culture, and male and female roles. Arun studies in Massachusetts, his sister Uma lives in India in a small provincial city. This novel recounts the disastrous attempts of an Indian daughter to leave her parents' home and achieve independence without marriage. Her parents, referred to as the indivisible unit MamaPapa, barely notice their daughter's aspirations as they lavish all of their attention on their only son. Desai's *The Zig Zag Way* (2004), is set in 20th century Mexico. In this novel Desai has departed from her familiar territories and set the story of identity and self-discovery in Mexico.

**Conclusion :** Therefore, Desai has intellectual thoroughness and stunning portrayals of world community, particularly her insistence on the multicultural dimension of contemporary Indian society. Desai presents to reader her outlook with reference to complexity of human relationships as a big contemporary problem and human condition. So, she analyses this problem due to shows changing human relationships in her novels. Desai takes up considerable contemporary issues as the subject matter of her fiction while remaining rooted in the tradition at the same time. She explores the anguish of individuals

living in modern society. Desai deals with complexity of human relationships as one of her major theme, which is a universal issue, as it attracts worldwide readers to her novels. She strives to show this predicament without any interferences. If Desai's reputation is established on her early portraits of domestic disharmony in traditional Indian families and the suffering of women in a largely patriarchal world, her later novels demonstrate that she writes equally well about the world of men, about Indians abroad, and about Westerners in India. Above all, she demonstrates again and again how gender issues are central to politics and the nation as well as in the family. Consequently, Desai has academic severity and brilliant portrayals of world society, predominantly her assertion on the multicultural dimension of contemporary men and milieu.

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## Representation of Indian Women: Freedom and Responsibility in Anita Desai's *Clear Light of Day*

Dr. Archana\*

### Abstract

Anita Desai's *Clear Light of Day* presents the steady struggle of the female in the patriarchal society. Women are oppressed due to their gender. They are expected to treat according to the Male-oriented opinions of the society. Desai has perfectly searched every part of female's world to develop herself in the patriarchal society. The issue which Desai saw in their surroundings like male authority at home and various places in society get explored in their writings. Of course, Indian females are shy, and submissive, but at the proper time, she is so much energetic that she remains solid like mountain become a formidable power that opposite landscape cannot subjugate her. Anita Desai is the first novelist who has perfectly explored the existential issues of her characters. She is the first to show the deep psychological actions of her character. Her fictional world is shown in the actions of human awareness. She delineates her individual character. Her sensitivity differentiates her from other novelists. In her writings, Anita Desai delineates the psychic actions. She puts some light on issues connected to female as well as male in an Indian society.

**Keywords:** Patriarchy, Exploitation, Oppression, Psyche, Human Consciousness

The description of the woman in the fictitious tale of Anita Desai shows the beginning of modern age in Indian English Literature. Desai has delineated female characters not as created of flesh and blood rather her characters are ruled by a sense of understanding and adjustment. They rebel against the order for the sake of freedom. It is realized that Anita Desai in her fictitious tale has attempted to

\* Assistant Professor, Department of English, Mahila Maha Vidyalaya Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi

reveal and conceal the actualities of conscious existence for which she revealed the mysteries of conscious existence. She says

...writing to me is a process of discovering the truth... the truth that is nine-tenth of the iceberg that lies submerged beneath the one-tenth visible portion we call reality. Writing is my way of plunging to the depths and exploring this underlying truth. All my writing is an effort to discover, to underline and convey the true significance of things (James Vinson, 348). Anita Desai's writings are about female issues. She examines their problems, be it of a mother, a daughter, a sister or a spouse. She depicts woman as a victim in a male-oriented society. The woman is always exploited by men and dependent upon men of her family. These are the several stages of an Indian woman's conscious existence and the writer highlights the emotional responses of female as she realizes these phases. It is not always a demeanour of adjustment, there are moments of revolt and sometimes she restores dare to raise voice of protest. Anita Desai's range is limited but still she gets enough chances to assess the records while delineating conscious existence. ShanthaKrishnaswamy has aptly commented that, "Anita Desai's novels constitute together the documentation, through fiction, of radical female resistance against a patriarchal defined concept of normality. She finds the links between female duality, myth and psychosis intriguing; each heroine is seen as searching for, finding and absorbing or annihilating the double that represents the socially impermissible aspects of her femininity." (Krishnaswami 237)

Woman who remains unmarried is seen as a socially incomplete being. Men have a proper right to prefer loneliness, but the Indian woman is not a free being in this connection. The woman who remains unmarried, whether by wish or account of situation, is often granted to be a frustrated person. In *Clear Light of Day*, Anita Desai presents this response when Dr. Biswas tells to Bim with a deep sigh Now I understand why you do not wish to marry. You have dedicated your life to others - to your sick brother and your aged aunt and your little brother. You have sacrificed your own life for them. We are further told, that Bim's mouth falls open in astonishment at being "so misunderstood, so totally misread. (Desai 9)

In *Clear Light of Day* (1980) Desai shows the history of Delhi with a middle-class family. The main character is Bimla Das, a history professor, a modern emancipated woman. Bim's reminiscence of the family; past influence her sterile presence; she is cheated by her unambitious sister Tara and narrates her remembrance in the deteriorating family house in Old Delhi. Their schizophrenic brother-in-law plays old cards. Tara does not realize why Bim does not wish anything to alter when she ignores the despair of the house. It appeared to her that the disappointment of her childhood and youth, were collected in the room under the worn dusty red rugs, in the bloated brassware behind the yellow pictures in the oval, everything that she had so disliked a child and that was still preserved here as if this were the storeroom of some dull, uninviting provincial museum.

Considered as an abnormal person, woman's anxieties are more easily pounced upon. Tara observes Bim telling to herself and pays heed to her meanness in scraping leftovers from meals into tiny saucers. She observes these as important and even if she does not state so directly-as somehow connected to Bim's spinsterhood. Bim pets her cat that presents her consciousness of this type of behaviour. You are thinking how old spinsters go ga-ga over their pets because they haven't children... You think animals take the place of babies for us love-starved spinsters. (Desai 6-7) Ila Das in *Fire on the Mountain*, with her ancient court shoes, wobbly top-knot, ragged petticoat and moth-eaten shoulder bag, would be known as a "typical dried up spinster." The tourists think of her as "the crazy woman" (Desai 197). As she hobbles along, men knock into her, shove her aside, burst into guffaws and create jeering comments. Even critics observe her "typical spinster-like the other spinsters of Carignano, Ila Das has her own whims and idiosyncrasies" Now all had left Ila Das,... she had become a dry, shrivelled, shrieking old woman. (Sunwani 87-88) Ila Das is modest. Anita Desai highlights how the individual woman in India who is poor becomes a victim of the faulty system.

Mira-masi in *Clear Light of Day*, is not alone. However, being widowed at a virginal fifteen, her condition is similar to that of the female who is single and without a spouse in India. It is rational to

handle her here. Mira-masi's condition wherein she is created to feel pain for her loneliness, is a typical one. She feels a loss of position with the loss of her spouse. Her horoscope is criticized for her spouse's demise by his family and she is created to pay for her fault by domestic works until she ages shabbier. It is mentioned, that her ugly look at least protects her from sexual assault by her brother-in-law. This reminds such type of domination of widowed women in India. The magazine 'Social Welfare' published an article by Lop Amudra bringing out this topic. Mira-masi's brothers-in-law create her the butt of their mock. Ultimately, when they bore her they turn her out. She's nothing more than a "cracked-pot, torn rag, picked bone" (Desai 108). Lop Amudra's article presents how Indian widows merit only an inferior status and are expected to practice lives of renunciation (Amudra 15). This is delineated by Anita Desai in the context of Mira-masi. When the children surprise why she always wears white, their mother describes, smoothing down her own rich silks, that white is the widow's colour. Mira-masi herself accepts that she has given away her marriage finery to her sisters-in-law to augment their dowries. The one sari she has been permitted to retain because it is white has a stripe of crimson and gold. This makes it "impossible for her to wear: taboo" (Desai 108). Anita Desai presents Miramasi to delineate how an Indian female is suppressed and crushed on account of being alone woman. What creates such domination possible? The answer is the economic reason. Most widows are far from being independent and are therefore taken as an unwanted responsibility both by parents and in-laws. Mira-masi, for example, is turned out by her in-laws when they doubt her of being a parasite. It is the poverty which creates such females victim of their loneliness. In Bim, Anita Desai describes a situation of Indian womanhood which has been growing in these years. She is the modern emancipated woman who has started realizing a new about traditionally regarding a woman's life and behavior (Sharma 138). Even at a very young age she interrogates; why marriage should be the only matter for a female? the only means of presenting herself. When Tara inquires what else there can be, she responded, Can't you think? I can think of hundreds of things to do instead. (Desai 40)

In this fictitious tale, however the personal realization of betrayal and double accountability as political role in postcolonial India after the country's Independence in 1947. Her evaluation of gender and politics thus spreads into a critique of Indian nationalism, which ignored gender problems from its political rhetoric of emancipation. Her novels have poetic touch but her mood when observed prosaic which explores that she was a talented girl who had the capability for both the world. In this fictitious tale *Clear Light of Day* Anita sent a message of dedication of one's conscious existence to others can transfigure one's conscious existence without them life "would remain flawed damaged".

Anita Desai delineates Indian women as separated characters encountering challenges imposed by Male-oriented society. They resemble colonial subjects whose conscious existence are damaged

Among the women character of Bim, Tara their mother and aunt Mira, all are subjugated by patriarchal culture which ignores women subjectivity. In this fictitious tale. Anita Desai has attempted to highlight how a family moves ups and downs in a period of time. She highlights the sacrifice of Bim for her family. This story delineates the sad movements of Dad family. Desai has portrayed the psychological condition of it's protagonist Bim who sacrifices her conscious existence for her younger brother Baba who is not well. Bim was a sharp and sensitive girl. In *Clear Light of Day* she presented the opinions and emotions which pass through the characters brain.

Desai's *Clear Light of Day* deals with the Dad family chronicle. The fictitious tale divided into four untitled parts and the first part refers to Tara's visit to the old house. The second episode deals with the past to the summer of 1947. Section third is set in an even earlier period of the Dad children's childhood and delineates the character of Mira massi but the fourth episode shows the present with a future note and describes the individual traits of Bim. Now we can state each portion mingles with a significant state in the conscious existence of the chief characters. The first female protagonist to be educated in Bim, the eldest daughter in family, when compared with other

She surprises why the Mishra daughters are in such a hurry to get married instead of education ... they're not educated yet, she expresses. Bim denies to permit the common Indian opinion that study and jobs are not grave issues for females and, if undertaken, are more in the disposition of stop-gap managements. Her approach the course of study she learns and later to her advancements is one of dedications. She does not take them as compensations for wedding. She is one of those pure existents with a deep and permanent interest in their work and projects (Parshley 22). It is half because she has a solid faith in herself and her work, that she can operate as a self-sufficient existent, connecting with males a platform of equality. Simone de Beauvoir remarks, that society needs the "true woman" as it calls her, to make herself object, to be the other (Simone de Beauvoir 291). This is something Bim does not accept to perform. She does not wish to play the conventional role of a sex-object and a mild lady. Sitting in the Mishra garden, observing Bim discuss to the males. Tara has to accept that Bim cannot be stated to flirt. As Bim slaps at a mosquito in an "unladylike" fashion by saying Manu not to bother with the flit gun, Tara shows that this is the trait of Bim-she never concerns to show herself in a centre to the opposite sex. Bim is someone who will always tell truth about her own knowledge and shut her eyes to the weakness of someone like Dr. Biswas, or even someone like Bakul and marry in order to run away from a condition or even from a phobia of remaining alone. What inspires Bim to survive as lonely in India, while still retaining qualifications of a genuine existent (which is something Mira-masi and Ila Das cannot arrange to perform), is again the economic reason. She functions and earns enough to help herself as she shows at one stage, a truth which would enhance any female's self-confidence. It is through gainful employment that woman has traversed most of the distance that separated her from the male; and nothing else can guarantee her liberty in practice...when she is productive, active, she regains her transcendences; in her projects she concretely affirms her status as subject; (Beauvoir 689)

Through the representations of single women, the reader is made conscious of how far social attitudes fetter such women. The attempt of someone like Bim to break through to broader perspectives is also taken in. However, one must take into account the fact, that while Bim does represent in many ways the new Indian woman, such a woman is still part of a very small minority and more likely, perhaps to be found among the upper classes. A positive feature in Anita Desai, is that she never depicts a situation or character as merely black or white. Anita Desai herself states that she aspires through her novels to create some significant statement on life-not necessarily a watertight, hard and fast set of rules but preferably an ambiguous, elastic, shifting and kinetic one... (inson 348) While Bim remains single and lives at home, there are indications of the tinge of remorse he feels as she summons her desires of wider range. She says about the desirability of "going away-into the world-something wider, freer, -brighter." (Desai 4) Anita Desai also highlights how the Indian social structure exerts an impact on Bim's selection. Bim has always been the only one to take up numerous accountability. If she had been a western female for example, she may have put her aunt and brother into right Homes and then went out to make her own conscious existence. While Bim does not "sacrifice" her conscious existence or her brother and aunt' life. Dr. Biswas realizes it, that is, by unwillingly rejects marriage, the "caring" element accounts in. The attachment of family counts with her, a truth which her western counterpart may be less influenced by. This is what creates for Bim's Indianness and what rounds out Anita Desai's depiction of Indian womanhood get tied in age old practices and rules.

Anita Desai has shown women's plight and thereby her falling victim to the old practices connected to them merely being women. They have to search their destiny, better future only in the family attachment, most of all through the marriage tie imposed by social customs. Even, she is not independent to select her spouse. Finally, in her marriage life she realizes only lust of men. Her human existence is dwarfed to an object. In this connection, Anita Desai has provided vent to the women's anxiety. Her revolt is clear in her modern role.

It is not always a sense of adjustment, there are episodes of rebellion and sometimes she restores her strength to raise voice of revolt. Feminism interpreted a consciousness of women and men in the family and society. Feminism is connected to political and social movements that connects a common purpose:-to explain, and achieve equality of sexes. This includes searching to provide all chances for females that are equal to those for males. The feminist literary criticism has created a revolution in literature In India a woman's life is controlled by tradition and family customs which are commanded by men. An ideal female who is presented daughter, sister, spouse and mother delineated as a colonized individual in a colonial society or the unwanted immigrant in foreign country. Women are not given opportunities. Under such circumstances women are not different to those under colonial government with both suffering from domination. Women in colonized countries are doubly tortured because of their race and also due to their femininity. Both the females and colonial subjects are marginalized since both try to maintain their own existence which is adjusted by the colonial establishment. Despite these obstacles, they struggle to maintain their condition to obtain their own identity. They realize heaviness which are the results of their marginalized condition.

In his choice of female writers K.R. Srinivas Iyengar shows about Desai's novels that her first two novels *Cry the Peacock* and *Voice in the City* have connected a fresh dimension to the talent of the Indian female writers in India. This dimension adopts numerous shapes. The journey to emancipation and significant contributions offered by Desai to Indian Novel in English. The effective point of self- revelation run through all her writings. Self-exploration makes them realize what is precious to them who feel satisfied, successful, sad or unsuccessful therefore what is correct for her is to be judged by herself only the whole journey is summoned revelation. Desai's mother characters are also not typical women. Sita, in *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* Bim mother "*Clear Light of Day*" is completely selfish and self-oriented. As in other writings, Desai's attention in *Clear Light of Day* is individual process of self-exploration.

### Sri Aurobindo as a Literary Critic : A Critical Investigation into the ideological motivations behind his literary criticism

Dr. Samik Sen\*

#### Abstract

In this essay, Sri Aurobindo's literary criticism has been considered, using mainly his *The Future Poetry* as the primary source. The present essay endeavours to foreground the effort on the part of Sri Aurobindo, patriot turned prophet, to 'Indianise' literary criticism in a special way. By delving into the psychology of burgeoning nationalism and spiritual revivalism in general and Sri Aurobindo's conversion to mysticism and his philosophy of integral yoga and life divine in particular the ideological implications of such a critical effort to 'Indianise' critical methodology has been sought to be investigated. Sri Aurobindo elaborated on Shakespeare's insistence on internal action with reference to the ancient Indian distinction between several strata or levels of universal being and brought in the two names used by the ancient rishis to define the objective and subjective aspects of this being: Virat and Hiranyagarbha. Aurobindo has effectively dismantled the traditional conception of criticism as an exercise devoted to the objective decoding of the meaning supposedly immanent in the text and has attempted to respond creatively to the subtle nuances of literary creations.

**Keywords:** Sri Aurobindo, Ideology, Indianise, Impressionistic Criticism, Spirituality

Ashis Nandy in his provocative examination of the ambiguous psychology of the colonized subject in *Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (1983) has shown how the sense of insecurity, loss and anguish occasioned by his early estrangement from his motherland prompted Sri Aurobindo to seek a

refuge in mysticism and spiritual practices. Brought up in a foreign land, alienated from any nourishing contact with his native culture, living under the strict instructions of a domineering Anglophile father, Aurobindo complained of being persistently haunted by the sense of an all-enveloping darkness, which may be diagnosed as a symptom of a condition of exile, uprootedness, cultural inferiority and hollowness engendered by his uneasy interaction with an alien culture. Such a tormented mental state naturally made this sensitive scholar turn inward to seek in a spiritual pursuit a refuge and an escape from the plaguing doubts, fears, anxieties and helplessness all that bedeviled his worldly existence. It may be concluded from this that for Sri Aurobindo spirituality emerged as a means of cultural self-assertion, as a Utopian world to which the ego could revert to continue its quest for power and self-fulfillment all of which had been frustrated on the intractable mundane plane. Nietzsche in his *Genealogy of Morals* perceptively explained the emergence of the inner life in man as a reaction formation against the inimical external world that thwarts man's fulfillment through the realization of will to power: All instincts that do not expend themselves outwardly turn inward. This is what I call internalization of man. It is by means of this that man first acquired what has come to be known as his "soul". The whole of inner experience, which was as thin as it would be if stretched tight between two membranes, expanded. It acquired depth, breadth and height- to the same extent that outward expenditure was curtailed (Nietzsche 119).

In the postmodern era, the word spirituality is often denigrated as a form of 'essentialism' that operates at best as a distraction from history and at worst as a justification for pernicious hierarchies of race, gender and class perpetuating the injustices and iniquities that prevail in human societies. But such denunciations of spirituality have overlooked spirituality's substantial investment in otherness and have failed to recognize that spirituality purports to be the experience and knowledge of what is other and is ultimate and the sense of identity and 'mission' that may arise from or be vested in that experience. Spirituality involves ideas of emancipation and an alternative world that have real political potential. Ewan Fernie in the introduction to his

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\* Department of English, Naba Barrackpur Prafulla Chandra Mahavidyalaya, West Bengal State University, West Bengal, India

female characters in this fictitious tale like Tara, Misras girls and Aunt Mira, shows a guidance of traditional model of female. The second part is dedicated to the Dad siblings. Desai highlights how merciful Bim is to Raja during his illness when without ever criticizing she receives the basic duty for his concern. One cannot believe that with in just a few years she would alter so radically in her approach towards her older brother. This fictitious tale “surpasses all other novels in English set in India in characterization, poetic use of landscape and integrity of vision (Daniel 107) Desai has intentionally used Bim as a means to ridicule and criticize earlier arguments that describes women as self-effacing female protagonists arousing compassion in others. This is consistent with her earlier denial of romantic tales and those patriarchal beliefs that create Raja give her the romantic tale. In *Clear Light of Day* Bim has two fold ambition: to be emotionally and economically independent. She never wanted to marry..... I shall earn my own living. and look after Mira massi and Baba and be independent”. She is independent, not even on her father “for all father cared I could have grown up illiterate- and cooked for my living or swept. So I had to teach myself history and teach myself to teach”. The past is significant for Bimla both the past and future exist always in present. Desai adds in end of the fictitious tale, a very important line from Elliot’s Four Quartets “ Time the destroyer is time the preserver” it is ‘time’ which shows an alteration in the lives of the characters in the fictitious tale. Time is destroyer, it has been presented in the fictitious tale but the time as a preserver is fixed in final part of the novel when Mulk and his aged guru are to sing at a party to which Bim and Baba have also been invited. The important unity of the family has been preserved by time in the final part in the fictitious tale. Desai’s *Cear Light of Day* deals with time in linked with spirituality is a realm of psychological novel and Bim faces mental agencies at numerous phases in this fictitious tale. Desai’s searching focuses in inner emotional world and psychic confusions as of her individual characters. Her female characters are in the centre of attraction in her novels for the revelation of the chief currents and under currents of human psyche. Anita Desai’s sensitive approach differentiates her from other novelists.

We can observe that the relationship of family is greater than any other affinity in the society. Bim understood their sufferings and that she could not survive without them and she forgives Raja for the humiliation and feels the value of family members. Anita Desai portrays Bim’s affinity with Raja as it changes through time. Desai debates that women must fight to create a position for themselves in a male-dominated society where womanhood is a more symbolic creation. Bim is not the ‘ideal’ lady. She is modern in the dimension of time by being revolutionary against the common stream of the male-dominated society and in revealing her true ability along with the struggle to fulfil her desires Bim gains her ‘feminine self’ in connection, not in loneliness.. Her profound dedication to her past as a matriarchal symbol, a feminine doctrine prepares her against the ravages of time. Her search connected to others, reaches beyond her introvert self.

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may be recognized as the first Indian critic who ventured to incorporate literary works in an interpretative framework, a critical paradigm constructed on the basis of a mystical perception and concomitant psycho-spiritual formulation which may be regarded as essentially Indian. Sri Aurobindo, himself a poet of rare genius, endowed with an extraordinarily profound vision, reacted against the cool, detached, dispassionate language of analytical and investigative critical exegesis that marks the western tradition, and embodied his critical explorations in a rhapsodic language that exudes poetic appeal. Analytical reason, the much-trumpeted legacy of the Enlightenment, shutting its eyes to the "light of Nature", pursues specialist paths with the assistance of artificial lights and fails in the lofty effort to reach the highest truth. As Ernst Cassirer explained in his book *The Philosophy of Enlightenment*: The philosophy of the eighteenth century...is not content to look upon analysis as the great intellectual tool of mathematico-physical knowledge; eighteenth century thought sees analysis rather as the necessary and indispensable instrument of all thinking in general...However much individual thinkers and schools differ in their results; they agree in this epistemological premise (Cassirer 12).

The oriental attitude to the subject is at least arguably different: "In neither India, nor China" writes William Barret in his *Irrational Man*, "nor in the philosophies that these civilizations produced, was truth located in the intellect. On the contrary the Indian and Chinese sages insisted on the very opposite, namely, that man does not attain to truth so long as he remains locked up in his intellect" (qt. in Iyengar, *Indian Writing in English* 172). As Sri Aurobindo succinctly put it: "Reason was the helper, Reason is the bar" (qt. in Iyengar 172). While not rejecting reason it is still necessary to surpass it if we wish to see ourselves in relation to Being. Tapan Raychaudhuri in his essay 'The Pursuit of Reason in nineteenth century Bengal' has traced the outburst of passionate religiosity in nineteenth century Bengal to a shift of emphasis from reason to emotion in the socio-political culture: The accumulated frustrations and humiliations of the colonial experience were no doubt one major factor behind the new emotionalism. Rational discourse was an

edited volume *Spiritual Shakespeares* emphasizes this subversive and emancipatory dimension of spirituality and writes: In spite of the long-standing critical prejudice against 'essentialism', specifically spiritual alterity is aesthetically and theoretically interesting because it configured not just as totally different from ordinary life but also as ultimately significant and real. Spirituality affords a credible alternative, or rather a range of such alternatives. It has a special power to break the illusion of what all-too-often is taken to be 'this world's eternity' (*2 Henry VI* 2.4.91). The conviction that an alternative world is more desirable as well as somehow more profoundly real than this one can motivate a hermit-like withdrawal from the world as it is, but it can also inspire positive revolutionary change (Fernie 4).

Now these reflections on the political implications and potential of spirituality gain weight, force and importance if they are applied to a scrutiny of the Aurobindonian brand of spiritual practice. The realization of the self, the basis of the traditional yoga of knowledge, Aurobindo admits, was 'as much the aim' of his yoga 'as of any other' (qt. in Heehs, *Sri Aurobindo* 95). But self-realization was not the sole aim of Aurobindo's yoga. 'The object sought after', he wrote in a letter of 1935, was not 'an individual achievement of divine realization for the sake of the individual, but something to be gained for the earth-consciousness' (qt. in Heehs, *Sri Aurobindo* 96). In most of the traditional systems of yoga, the self-realized, enlightened individual aspires to depart 'out of the world and life into Heaven or Nirvana'. Sri Aurobindo repudiated this as the necessary issue of yogic practice. 'A distinct and central object of' his yoga, he asserted, was 'a change of life and existence' (qt. in Heehs 96). This would be achieved by 'bringing in' a new power of consciousness which he defined as 'the Supramental'. To attain this power and to make it 'active directly in earth-nature' he spent more than four decades 'hewing out a road' in uncharted regions. It was with this in mind that he declared: 'Our yoga is not a retreading of old walks, but a spiritual adventure' (Aurobindo, *On Himself* 109). K.N.Panikkar observes that in Colonial India 'there was a shift of emphasis from otherworldliness and supernaturalism to the problems of worldly

existence in religious thought'. Panikkar further contends: The religious protest and reform movements during the pre-colonial period – beginning with Buddhism and going on to the heterodox sects in the eighteenth century— were invariably concerned with the ways and means of salvation. In contrast religious reform in colonial India was almost indifferent to this earlier preoccupation. More important, even those who assigned a dominant role to religion, such as Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Vivekananda, were not indifferent to the needs of material existence over religious demands (Panikkar 66).

Sri Aurobindo's spiritual practice too belonged to this tradition and it defined spirituality in terms of the improvement and upliftment of the material existence. K.D. Sethna in his monograph *Sri Aurobindo on Shakespeare* has summed up Sri Aurobindo's radically different approach to spirituality and has discovered an affinity between Aurobindo and Shakespeare in this respect: Sri Aurobindo is that extraordinary type of yogi whose aim is to reach up to the superhuman, the divine, in order to strike back upon life— strike back not with a lash of life urging man to renounce earth by a mighty mass-movement towards Nirvana, but with a sort of super-Prospero's staff so as to awaken man to the possibilities of a Divine drama on the stage of the world. Sri Aurobindo would recreate human life. And in that ideal he has certain general affinities with his favourite Shakespeare (Sethna, *Aurobindo on Shakespeare* 25).

What Sethna emphasizes here is the uniqueness of Aurobindo's spiritual practice which unlike all other spiritual philosophies and practices, does not preach absolute renunciation of the world, but rather aspires to transform the life on the mundane plane into a 'Divine drama'. Aurobindo the seer and literary critic seems to have been aware of the spiritual dimensions of Shakespearean creations for he discovered in the bard's poetic creativity a spiritual vision that instead of holding a faithful mirror up to nature transforms the actual conditions of human existence and recreates them in the light of eternity. For Aurobindo writes in another context: The poet's greatest work is to open to us new realms of vision, new realms of being, our own and the world's and he does this even when he is dealing with

the actual things. Homer with all his epic vigour of outward presentation does not show us the heroes and deeds before Troy in their actuality as they really were to the normal vision of men, but much rather as they were or might have been to the vision of gods. Shakespeare's greatness lies not in his reproduction of actual human events or men as they appear to us buttoned and cloaked in his life— others of his time would have done that as well, if with less radiant force of genius, yet with more of the realistic crude colour or humdrum drab of daily truth,— but in his bringing out in his characters and themes of things essential, intimate, eternal, universal in man and nature and Fate on which the outward features are borne as fringe and robe and which belong to all time but are least obvious to the moments experienced: when we do see them life presents to us another face and becomes something deeper than its actual present mask (Aurobindo, *The Future Poetry* 324).

What is evident from Aurobindo's observations is that he does not subscribe to the mimetic theory of art which defines artistic activity as the imitation of reality as it is. For Aurobindo the excellence of Shakespeare lies in the dramatist's extraordinary ability to bring out the eternal from the temporal, recreate the actual in terms of the ideal and the Universal. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that in his aesthetic philosophy Aurobindo was inclined to the Romantic theory of art which denounced servile imitation of the reality as it is and valorized the expression of a transcendental vision of the artist and reproduction of the actual conditions of existence in terms of that creative ideal. What Aurobindo has here achieved is a reconciliation of this fundamental tenet of Romantic poetics with his own spiritual philosophy. The Divine life on the earth that Aurobindo conceptualized is in another way conceived by gifted poets like Shakespeare who has the power to reproduce the actual in terms of the ideal or in other words to bring out the ideal potentials from the actual conditions of human existence.

Whatever may be the political implications of Aurobindo's spiritual exercises; his yogic vision of life cast an indelible impression upon his creative and critical negotiations with literature. Aurobindo

The subjective element in Sri Aurobindo's literary criticism becomes evident if one considers the way he elaborated his account of Shakespeare's insistence on internal action with reference to the ancient Indian distinction between several strata and levels of Universal Being and by bringing in the two names used by the Rishis for the objective and subjective aspects of this Being: Virat and Hiranyagarbha respectively. As Aurobindo judges it: Shakespeare's is not a drama of mere externalized action, for it lives from within and more deeply than our external life. This is not Virat, the seer and the creator of gross forms, but Hiranyagarbha, the luminous mind of dreams, looking through those form to see his own images behind them (Aurobindo, *The Future Poetry* 80).

Then Aurobindo mentions the Vedic sage Viswamitra whom Indian tradition credits with creating a new heaven and earth in his sacred wrath against the curbs imposed by God Indra. Sri Aurobindo continues: More than any other poet Shakespeare has accomplished mentally the legendary feat of the impetuous sage Viswamitra", his power of vision has created a Shakespearean world of its own, and it is, in spite of its realistic elements, a romantic world in the very true sense of the word, a world of the wonder and free power of life and not its mere external realities, where what is here dulled and hampered finds a greater enlarged and intense breath of living, an ultra-natural play of beauty, curiosity and amplitude (Aurobindo, *The Future Poetry* 80).

Objections may be raised by critics who are obsessively preoccupied with the idea of criticism as subordinate and complementary to creation that such an association of Shakespeare with Viswamitra is misleading since the English bard is lacking in that very spirituality which distinguishes the Vedic sage. But what Aurobindo accomplishes here is a dismantling of the traditional conception of criticism as an intellectual exercise devoted to the revelation of the one and only meaning inherent in a text and he therefore comes somewhat close to critics such as Roland Barthes who much later suggested in an essay entitled "Criticism as language" (1963) that: The task of criticism... does not consist in "discovering" the work of the author under

inadequate incentive for the patriotic fervor. (Raychaudhuri, 63) Aurobindo too, it can be reasonably assumed, was alive to the dichotomy of western Reason and Indian emotionalism and for him spirituality became an effective and alternative strategy, an ideological tool to counter and challenge the superiority of the western worldview which was based on the Enlightenment legacy of rationality.

Since for Aurobindo "all life is yoga", the element of spirituality permeated all his intellectual, critical and creative exercises and the critical study of literature too was conceived in terms of a spiritual voyage into the heart of the transcendental truth, the achievement of which elevates human life to a supra-mundane level. Aurobindo protested against the scientifically-oriented critical methodology which inspired a mechanical dissection of the works of art by reducing aesthetic creations to abstract rational formulae and systems. Aurobindo denounced as reductive critical endeavours that under the influence of psychoanalytic researches ventured to trace the genesis of a work of art back to the complex chemistry of the human body and the human psyche. In a sonnet composed on the Shakespearean model, "A dream of Surreal Science", he ridicules the scientific perception that all poetry or spirituality is merely a matter of body's chemistry: One dreamed and saw a gland write Hamlet, drink At the mermaid, capture immortality; A committee of hormones on the Aegean's brink composed the Iliad and the Odyssey (qt. in Sethna, *Aurobindo on Shakespeare* 3).

Instead of subscribing to such critical ingenuity Aurobindo firmly clung to his belief that the original impetus of any great creation comes from within, from a mystery inscrutable that does not yield to rational comprehension. In Aurobindo's creative response to the poetic creations of Shakespeare the focus is consistently kept on the interiority of the poetic experience and the inwardness of its originary conception. While the execution and embodiment of the elusive but certainly not insubstantial poetic vision conceived by the poet requires the participation of the outer mind and other external instruments, the inspiration remains invariably internal. Such a critical perception involves in fact a subtle undermining of the very conception of criticism

as a rational activity dedicated to the disinterested, objective decoding of the essence of literary creations; it is a deliberate blurring of the artificial boundary drawn between the creative and the critical functions. Aurobindo's critical explorations by acknowledging criticism's inability to penetrate into the ultimate mystery of poetic creation implicitly proposes a combination of the creative and critical approaches to the literary artefact.

While elaborating on his conception of "overhead poetry" Aurobindo warns against a superficially analytical reading of such poetic productions which manages to capture only the surface mental meaning. In spite of granting that technical perfection or flawlessness often affords aesthetic pleasure, Aurobindo maintains that "over mind touch" does not consist in an understanding of the technical aspects of literary creation, but it emerges "in the undertones and overtones of the rhythmic cry and a language which carries in it a great depth or height or width of spiritual vision, feeling or experience. But all that has to be felt, not analyzable" (Aurobindo, *Letters on Poetry* 77). Aurobindo draws upon Hamlet's soliloquy to point out the inadequacies of the conventional critical intellect in encountering effectively the "overheard poetry": "The mere critical intellect not touched by a rarer sight can do little here. What might be called the Johnsonian critical method has obviously little or no place in this field—the method which expects a precise logical order in thoughts and language and pecks at all that departs from a matter of fact or a strict and rational ideative coherence of a sober and restrained classical taste...But also this method is useless in dealing with any kind of romantic poetry. What would the Johnsonian critic say to Shakespeare's famous lines, Or take up arms against a sea of troubles And by opposing end them? He would say, "What a mixture of metaphors and jumble of ideas! Only a lunatic could take up arms against the sea!" Shakespeare knew very well what he was doing! He saw the mixture as well as any critic could and he accepted it because it brought home, with an inspired force which a neater language could not have had, the exact feeling and the idea that he wanted to bring out (Aurobindo, *Savitri*, Letters 844-5). 'Still more

scared would the Johnsonian be', Aurobindo continues, 'by any occult or mystic poetry. The Veda, for instance, uses with what seems like a deliberate recklessness the mixture, at least the association of disparate images, of things not associated together in the material world which in Shakespeare is only an occasional departure...'(Aurobindo, *Savitri*, Letters 844-5).

What is important to note here is that Sri Aurobindo while drawing his reader's attention to the limitations of a Johnsonian critic who is governed by his logical expectations and presuppositions in confronting the baffling reality of the literary text, also engages in subverting the idea of criticism as a detached, rational, objective activity capable of translating the magic of poetic vision into terms of intelligible everyday reality. Aurobindo thus attempts to establish and buttress through his critical activities a conception of art as an autonomous and independent exercise and by rendering criticism itself creative, implicitly advances the theory that no essential difference exists between creation and criticism. However preposterous the assumption that criticism is an 'autotelic activity'(Eliot, *Selected Essays* 24) may seem to the T.S. Eliot of "The Function of Criticism" Aurobindo can find a sympathetic defender of his view in Gilbert, the speaker in Oscar Wilde's dialogue "The critic as Artist", who affirms "Criticism is in fact both creative and independent...The critic occupies the same relation to the work of art that he criticizes as the artist does to the visible world of form and colour or the unseen world of passion and of thought" (Wilde 966). This view is clearly antithetical to the view of criticism as complementary to creative writing, aiming at objectivity, striving to see the object as it really is, as Matthew Arnold urged. Criticism, Wilde's Gilbert contends, is in its essence purely subjective, and seeks to reveal its own secret and not the secret of another "(Wilde 967). Aurobindo almost echoes the idea when he asserts that "all criticism of poetry is bound to have a strong subjective element in it...all is relative here, Art and Beauty also, and our view of things and appreciation of them depends on the consciousness which views and appreciates" (Aurobindo, *Letters on Poetry, Literature and Art* 181).

The short story has its own advantages, as defined in the words of H.G. Wells as: The jolly art, of making something very bright and moving; it may be horrible or pathetic or funny or profoundly illuminating, having only this essential, that it should take from fifteen to fifty minutes to read aloud. (*A Short History of the Short Story: Western and Asian Traditions* 2012)

The beauty of his short stories can be best analysed by using the scientific way of interpretation of language. The role of scientific way of interpretation can be fulfilled by using stylistics. It is said that beauty lies in the eyes of onlooker, but it is stylistics that teaches how to look into or observe that beauty. The Stylistic Study is not limited to the poetic expressions, but it has enough scope in the shorter as well as longer forms of fiction.

## 2. Meaning and Definition of Style

Stylistics is based on linguistics and linguistics is an oriented subject which is an objective presentation of the language of a text. In stylistics, a text is analysed methodically and systematically. In following a particular style, an author handles and employs language skillfully so that his creative and artistic aim may leave a unique impact on the readers. In stylistics, the style of the writer is studied how the language has been used in the creative work. For this purpose, the several elements of the language are scrutinized and examined so that the implicit meanings may become clear. Each and every one has his or her own way to perceive, or saying the things in different ways. In the same way, an author has his unique way to present the things in his own style. The Greeks and Romans found style as the - 'Ornament of thought' and proper words in proper places' (Contemporary Literary Theory: A Student's Companion 134)

In psychological oriented theories, style is identified with the writer who has written a text. There is no connection of style with the subject matter or the content of a text. Hence a writer may use unique features with the genre of his work to make his style distinct. In fact, a writer by using different style, leaves his specific mark of stamp on his work. This results in putting the writer at the centre of his creative work. The observation of Leibnitz is apt when he remarks

consideration something "hidden" or "profound" or "secret" which has so far escaped notice...but only in fitting together the language of the day and the language of the author...if there is such a thing as critical proof it lies in the in the ability to discover the work under consideration but on the contrary to cover it as completely with one's own language (Barthes 127-128).

Aurobindo, as a critic of Shakespeare indeed proved his commendable competence in covering the work of Shakespeare as completely as possible with the language of the spiritual philosophy that he propounded and promulgated. Indeed, as David Lodge in his article "*Literary Criticism and Literary Creation*" reminds us: Criticism as the expression of subjective response is of course an essentially romantic idea and implies a romantic theory of literary creation as self-expression. It is often associated with the lyrical and impressionistic, musing-in-the-library style of critical discourse which I.A.Richards and F.R.Leavis, and the American New Critics, sought to discredit and expunge from academic criticism from the 1920s to the 1950s. But more recently the idea that there is no essential difference between creation and criticism has been given a new academic respectability, and a new sophistication, under the aegis of post-structuralism, and especially the theory of deconstruction, which questions the very distinction between subjective and objective (Lodge 145).

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## The Stylistic Study of the Short Stories by Mulk Raj Anand

*Kapil Dev Bhati\**

*Dr. M. Nazzar\*\**

### *Abstract*

The present article entitled 'The Stylistic Study of the Short Stories of Mulk Raj Anand' undertakes the stylistic study of the four popular stories; *The Lost Child*, *The Barber's Trade Union*, *The Man Whose Name Did Not Appear in Census* and *The Parrot in the Cage* by Anand. To make a better understanding of the short stories- point of view, characters and imagery are discussed elaborately. Under the discussion of stylistic study, there is done the minute scanning of linguistic content. The features like figures of speech- simile, metaphor, anaphora, personification, alliteration transferred epithet, and repetition studied in a focused manner.

**Key Words-** Short Story, Style, Stylistics, linguistics, Figures of Speech, Syntactic, Phonological, Morphological, Indianisation. Indian Expressions, Hindi Words.

**1. Introduction :** "Mr. Anand is not a mere storyteller, he is a poet as well. There runs a fine poetic streak through his stories" (*Alfred Pearles in Life and Letters 1987*)

The above given statement doesn't mean that Mulk Raj Anand excelled in poetry, it means that he narrated his tales with figurative beauty. Anand laments with his companions and contemporary literary critics of his age that his stories have not been paid attention well during his lifetime. As we all know, he got acknowledged his caliber for his novels in his life by winning prestigious awards- '*Sahitya Academy Award*' and being honored with '*Padma Bhushan*' and '*International Peace Prize*'. As the other explorers have tried to dive down in his novels, we need to appreciate and expand his forte of his short stories, the most entertaining and the shortest form of fiction.

\* Research Scholar, CCS University, Meerut

\*\* Research Supervisor, CCS University, Meerut

## 5.2 Characters

All the characters in 'The Lost Child' are unnamed. Even the main character is not named. The characters in the short story are common Indian men. There are the two parental figures, their child, a sweetmeat-seller, a flower-seller, a man selling ballons, a juggler and a man who tries to pamper the child when it is separated from its parents. The characters in the 'The Barber's Trade Union' are all named except narrator, mothers, retired Subedar and cousin of Chandu. Their names are accompanied by their professions. Chandu, the barber boy (protagonist), *Lalla* Hukum Chand, the lawyer, Kalan Khan, the dentist, Bijai Chand, the burly landlord, Thanu Ram, the *sahukar*, *Pandit* Parmanand, Nringan Das, the barber of the town, Dhunoo, the other barber. The characters in the third story, are Ramji, his wife Luxmi, their son Shibu, Moti, the family cow, the unnamed census officer and his two attendants. The poverty stricken family's head is awe struck with knocks n the door then the whole drama takes place. The last of chosen stories, is concentrating on the character of Rukmani and her pet parrot. The Punjabi expressions of the parrot are giggling. The tale of the plight of the old lady Rukmani is appealing. The unnamed gram stall keeper represents the face of human compassion.

## 5.3 Imagery

The word imagery has varied meanings, someone claims it as mental pictures. Imagery as defined in 'A Glossary of Literary Terms' as "Imagery" (that is images taken collectively)"The recent significance of the term is figurative constructions having metaphors and smiles:

"An old banyan here outstretched its powerful arms onto the blossoming jack and jamun and neem and champak and scrisha and cast it's shadows across beds of golden cassis and crimson gulmohar as an old grandmother spreads her skirts over her young ones." (TLC, 2),

The above given quote has the images of soothing Indian flora in comparison to the affection of old grandmother:

that-'Languages are the best mirrors of human mind' (Contemporary Literary Theory: A Student's Companion 134) .

Comte de Buffon is correct to say that 'style is the man' because man is what he does and how he does. So it is right to say that style is the reflection of personality. As per this definition, it can be said that a man possesses certain characteristics and habits which influence the character of that man. As the style is directly related to the mind of a man, it leaves its imprint on the mind of the writer. Puttenham also supports this psychological view of the style in the following words: If the man be grave, his speech and style is grave, if light-hearted, his style and language also light, if the mind be haughty and hot, the speech and the style is also hardly modest; if it is humbled or base and meek, so is also the language and the style. (The Novels of Vikram Seth 33)

Knowing this truth that a definition is not complete in itself, it can't define completely each and every aspect of the topic. The term Style defined in different sources in different words: "a distinctive manner of expression (as in writing or speech)" (<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/style>) "the manner of linguistic expression in prose or verse- as how speakers or writers say whatever it is that they say" (A Glossary of Literary Terms, p. 303) Without style, things are tasteless, flashy. It adds colours to the picture. It makes seen the things are unseen. It makes things pleasurable or wakes up the aesthetic insights in the reader. It is the thing that makes the things printed on the mind creating long lasting impression. Style makes the language charged with meaning.

## 3. Meaning and Definition of Stylistics

Stylistics, the field of language study in objective and scientific manner, came into prominence in 1950s. The stylistics is not the modern invention, but it has deep connections with ancient Greeks and Romans like Cicero and Quintillian but then the subject used to be known as Rhetoric. The mother of stylistics is rhetoric- the art of speaking effectively in public (Contemporary Literary Theory: A Student's Companion 133).

Even during the medieval age rhetoric was part of higher education. After the gap of two centuries, there emerged a new subject stylistics armed with linguistics. Roman Jakobson, the renowned figure of Russian Formalism gave it a revolutionary turn in 1960s: **Stylistics**, study of the devices in languages (such as rhetorical figures and syntactical patterns) that are considered to produce expressive or literary style.” (<https://www.britannica.com/science/stylistics>)

The other definitions are as follows: Stylistics is defined as “a branch of linguistics which studies the features of situationally distinctive uses (varieties) of language, and tries to establish principles capable of accounting for particular choices made by individual and social groups in their use of language” (David Crystal, *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics* 1992.332).

Under this stylistic study, I will confirm the features that make Mulk Raj Anand’s art of storytelling enchanting.

#### 4. Methodology to be Used in the Stylistic Study

The present study involves the stylistic study of the short stories- *The Lost Child*, *The Barber’s Trade Union*, *The Man Whose Name Did Not Appear in Census* and *The Parrot in the Cage* by Anand. The study is intended to know artistic the use of language by the story writer. This study is completed using the heuristic checklist of linguistics and stylistics given by Michael H. Short and Geoffrey N. Leech in ‘Style in Fiction’ (2007). The checklist provides the organized help for categorization of varied linguistic levels, in relation to style. The levels have syntactical categories, figurative varieties, lexical categories, cohesion and context. Leech and Short (2007) highlight limited and selected details but this will help out the readers to know the important and relevant characteristics through this survey.

The study is focused on the level of figures of speech, considering grammatical, phonological and lexical repetitions. The grammatical and lexical plans will be explored in the form of parallelism, anaphora and repetitions. The phonological aspects will be read in the form of alliteration, consonance, assonance. To prove the literary

significance of the linguistic selections of the writer. With this, to make this study fruitful, it is strictly required to gauge and scan each and every word, phrase, and sentence, using stylistics under the domain of linguistics. The method will be used near to observational and scientific. There will be the deep scanning of the texts of the short stories.

#### 5. About the Short Stories

Although there are several short stories in different collections of short stories by Anand, but because of the limitations, I would like to refer to his most acclaimed and popular ones- ‘The Lost Child’ ‘The Barber’s Trade Union’, ‘The Man Whose Name Did Not Appear in Census’ and ‘The Parrot in the Cage’.

##### 5.1 Point of View

The short story ‘The Lost Child’ is told by the third person narrator, the narrator is omniscient. Under this point of view, the narrator is intrusive. According to the convention, the narrator is privileged to know characters’ thoughts, actions, events, emotions, feelings. The narrator observes the activities taking place in the life of unnamed child protagonist and other characters during a fair. The story ‘The Barber’s Trade Union’ is narrated by an unnamed narrator, friend of the protagonist, Chandu, the barber. The narrator always to Chandu, knows each and every happening in the life of the protagonist and the doings of the other characters. The third story ‘The Man Whose Name.....’ told by the third person narrator, omniscient and keen observance of the narrator makes the events animating and lively. It is the point of view that makes the readers believed about the reports and description of narrator as an authentic one. The pathetic and humorous tale of Ramji’s life is narrated well by the narrator.

The fourth tale, ‘The Parrot in the Cage’ is told with the third person point of view, he is not the part of the story, but he is the silent keen observer and good narrator. The narrator tells each and every minute detail with depth.

## 7. Use of Pure Indian Expressions

The phrases and sentences given below are pure desi expressions from Indian society as typical in the works of Anand. The fusion of local tongue into English language form a different kind of expression, the expression to be printed on the brain. All such expressions makes the description animating. "Ohe khol, ohe khol.." (TMWNDNAC 156) 'Huzoor, mai- bap' (TMWNDNAC 159) 'Ni tu kithe hain ?' (TPG 185) 'Ni tu ki karni hain ?' (TPG 185) 'Allah ho Akbar!' (TPG 185) 'Har har Mahadev!' (TPG 185) 'Sat Sri Akal!' (TPG 185) 'Vay jaja, eater of your masters' (TPG 186) 'Han, han, son, han' (TPG 188) 'Acha, son, acha' (TPG 188)

"Shiva's mad laughter" (TLC, 2), the phrase is an allusion to Shiva's *raudra* incarnation. The fierce image is the indiction of whole world destruction.

## 6. Use of Figures of Speech

### 6.1 Simile

Simile is one of the most exploited figures of speech. In this figures of speech, there is the use of comparative words as, like and so. There are various examples of structures of comparison using comparative words: as, like, and so. "...alleys emerged a gaily clad humanity, thick as a swarm of bright coloured rabbits issuing from a barren" (TLC 1) "It was a bowering mustard field, pale like melting gold..." (TLC 1) "you little swine, you go disguising yourself as a clown.." (TBTU 10) "And yet she where she was, only shuffling like a hen sitting over her eggs" (TPG 186-187)

### 6.2 Metaphorical Expressions

The literary artist, most of the time says the things using metaphors. There is comparison without using comparative words. It will be correct to say that metaphorism in body and correct use of metaphor in text, is essential. "They entered the flooded sea of sparkling silver sunshine.." (TLC 1) "your father is a top-heavy baboon !" (TBTU 13) "And your brother is a long-legged spider" (TBTU 13)

### 6.3 Examples of Personification

Personification is one of the popular figures of speech. In it, lifeless or non living objects are attributed with human characteristics. Anand has personified the morning to enhance the beauty of expression: "The joyous morning gave greetings and unashamed invitations to all..." (TLC 1)

### 6.4 Examples of Anaphora

An anaphora is one of the rhetorical devices, to create emphasis. There is the repetition of word or phrase given at beginning of first phrase or sentence at the beginning of succeeding phrases or sentences. "Come, child, come. Come to the footpath" (TLC 2) "A

flower-seller hawked, 'A garland of gulmohar, a garland of gulmohar.' (TLC 3) "Coward! Coward! shouted Luxmi. 'Coward.'" (TMWNDNAC 160) "Oh, why did you have to turn me out of my room... Oh why..." (TPG 186)

### 6.5 Precedents of Alliteration

Alliteration is one of the oldest or may be the oldest figures of speech in the world. The initial consonantal sound or letter is repeated in this figure of speech: "Ram! Ram! Ram!" (TBTU 10) "They entered the flooded sea of sparkling silver sunshine..." (TLC 1) "han, han, son, han" (TPC 188) "Hai, hai !" (TPC 188)

### 6.6 Tranferred Epithet

The transferred epithet is the synonym of *Hyppalage* of Greek origin which means "interchange" or "Exchange" (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hypallage>). We find the examples of this figure of speech in the phrases which are given below: "It wended its weary way circuitously to the north" (TLC 1) "ebbing and falling with each fresh eddy of wild wind" (TLC 1)

### 6.7 Use of Repetition and Examples

Repetition is the literary device which is used to make emphasis. In the end of the story, *The Lost Child* the child reflecting its stubbornness only asks for its mother and other examples from other stories, are reiterated again and again. "I want my mother, I want my father" (TLC 4-5). "A garland of gulmohar, a garland of gulmohar" (TLC 3) "Ni tu ki karni hain ?" (TPG 185)

### 6.9 Use of Indian Expressions

The table given below contains Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi words to give the flavor of Indian-ness. In this table, words are provided their phonetic shape with meaning. The words given in the list are nouns:

into three stages: savagery, barbarism and civilization (23-25). In all three stages a theory of progression has been valued as Tylor argues "a transition from the savage to our own would be, practically, that very progress of art and knowledge which is our main element in the development of culture" (24). The production of knowledge through various disciplines and the rise of industrialized societies universally rank as the most progressive signs of 'civilization.' If our focus is drawn to the development of intellectual and cultural resources of any race or tribe or caste as the touchstone by which the 'civilization' will be measured, a study of varied types of workforce and professionals involved in this production have to be studied first. Human faculty has multiple manifestations and usages in which different body parts including brain and feet are physiologically and psychologically engaged in dispatching respective duties. In respect of multiple manifestations of human faculties it shouldn't be assumed that one person is born unequal to another person or that every person is destined to become Albert Einstein; rather the manifestation of human faculties depend on familial, social and cultural factors.

Francis Galton (1822-1911), a British polymath, having been influenced by Darwinian Theory of biological evolutionism, authored two seminal books, *Hereditary Genius: An Inquiry into its Laws and Consequences* (1869) and *Inquiries into Human Faculty* (1883) and discussed in details the determining factors of application of human faculties. He also echoed Tylor's observation that "... the human race were utterly savages in the beginning; and that, after myriads of years of barbarism, man has but very recently found his way into the paths of morality and civilization" (337). In respect of genius and hereditary function of human faculty and its comparative analysis, his observation is: "The instincts and faculties of different men and races differ in a variety of ways ... The living world does ... consist ... of an endless variety of them, that have grown ... through selective influences into closer adaptation to their contemporaries and to the psychical circumstances of the localities they inhabit" (2-3). More than that, the productive capacity of men and women, according to Galton, rests on a continuous application of

## 7. Intended Deviations

### 7.1 Examples of Morphological Deviations

The literary artist intentionally deviate from the standards of language to create aesthetic appeal. There are the experimentations in morphological usage. The Hindi words are pluralized by adding suffixes. As we all know, Morphology is the scientific study of the construction of the words-new coinages. Compounding of Words like "red-eyed" (TLC 1), "mud-walled"( TLC 2), "*kikar tree*"(187),coining of new words by pluralising like "*shabashes*" (TBTU 14), "*chaprasis*" (TBT 9), "*sahibs*" (TBTU 9), "*policias*" (TMWNDNAC 153), "*goondaas*" (TMWNDNAC 158), "*lathis*" (TPG 187).

### 7.2 Examples of Phonological Deviation

Anand has tried to catch every phenomenon artistically, even he has represented the pouting mouth of a sobbing child for its mother as "M-o-th-er". (TLC 1) The child shrieking at the loudest pitch as "Fa—ther, Mother" (TLC 5) making a change in the pitch, using high pitch. There are the other constructions which reflect the phonological activity. "*Ooon, hoon....*"(TMWNDNAC 156) "*cain-cain*" (TMWNDNAC 156) "*Khat-khat*" (TMWNDNAC 157) "*Dipty Collator*" (TPG 187) "*Rukmaniai ni Rukmaniai*" (TPG 185)

### 7.3 Syntactic Deviations

Syntactic deviations take place where there is the diversion from the standard syntax or set theory of syntax. As admitted universally, syntax is the ordered formation of sentence. If there is breach or violation of rules in the formation of a sentence, then we call that syntactic deviation. "Come, child, Come." "playing at soldiering, shopkeeping, or clerking..." "But I am going to teach these orthodox idiots a lesson. I am going on strike."

## Conclusion

The use of figurative language has made the expressions of the short stories artistic and beautiful. The use of pure and original Indian expressions in either Hindi, Punjabi or any other languages has

mould the stories in Indian-ness. The understanding of Linguistic deviations will make us understood the stories in better ways. I hope that such kind of studies will open up new paths for the researchers. All the features discussed above have established the General Indian English globally. The upcoming generations of authors are using such characteristic with authenticity and this has lots of scope. The understanding of this will make popular Indian scenarios, phenomena, intellectual world of short story-telling, and the philosophical observation to catch each and every happening.

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## Marginalization of Ghosts: An Ambedkarite Critique of Caste System in Bangla Movie *Bhuter Bhubishyot* Jyoti Biswas\*

### Abstract

Division of laborers in contrast to division of labor remains the very base of what is known as caste-based identity in Hindu society. The former fixes the social status of a person and theorizes that such kind of status how much abominable and discriminatory it might be, is immutable, infallible because this is what the divine creator had ordained in creation. This is how Dr. Ambedkar critiques Hindu caste system. But what if a cinematic interpretation justifies this division of laborers, that, ghosts maintain caste-based identity the way they used to maintain in their previous human life and that a discriminatory division of laborers they maintain even in their ghost life? The present paper raises all these questions to freshly interrogate the subtle form of caste system shown in a popular Bangla cinema *Bhuter Bhubishyot*, directed by Anik Dutta. This paper critiques the presentation of Brahminical interpretation of ghost life and its justification of caste hierarchy and its discriminatory behavior from an Ambedkarite reading of this movie. It exposes how division of laborers is still justified in life after death and marginalizes some ghost characters. Although human imagination can transcend the boundaries of mortal life, but the Brahminical imagination seems to be more ambitious to present the audience with a presumed hierarchy-based replica of human life in the cinematic representation of the world of ghosts.

**Key words:** *Division of laborers, Division of labor, Caste system, Marginalization, Ghost, Cinema, Ambedkarite*

Anthropologist Edward B. Tylor (1832-1917) formulated his theory of cultural evolutionism in his two volume magnum opus *Primitive Culture* (1871). He traced the evaluation of human culture

\* Ph.D scholar, Department of English Studies, Central University of Jharkhand

human faculties “to prevent their perishing by disuse” (26). This brief study indicates that an ironsmith and a teacher develop their respective professional excellence under certain familial, social and cultural circumstances. It also suggests that they have to continue polishing their respective skills lest their skill gets unproductive. The aforementioned arguments and observations pave the way for a theoretical study of different professions found in each society.

Published in 1776, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* by Scottish economist-turned-philosopher Adam Smith (1723-1790) is the first economic treatise that examines the promising role of ‘division of labor’ in society. Smith’s analysis of labor division justifies the productive output of an industrial society in which the machine and technological manufacturing and infrastructure remain the very base of all work forces. Smith proposes his hypothesis at the beginning in the following assertive way: “The greatest improvement in the productive powers of labour, and the greater part of the skill, dexterity, and judgment with which it is anywhere directed, or applied, seem to have been the effects of the division of labour” (17). Smith elucidates three interrelated reasons responsible for improvement in productive work: first, increasing dexterity among workmen; second, saving time during manufacturing; and third, invention of great number of machines (21-22). After studying the capacity of workmen, he argues how unlike animals, a man or a woman is too much dependent on another fellow man or woman for her/his daily survival which in turn creates so many interrelated yet distinct labor-oriented professions (30). In other words, the creation of division of labors or labor-oriented professions in human society is the consequent outcome of our dependence on others. We come across people engaged in different professions, such as cultivator, carpenter, potter, sweeper, rickshaw-puller, scavenger, businessman, teacher in a civilized society. Smith compares the profession between a philosopher and a street porter and argues: “The difference between the most dissimilar characters, between a philosopher and a common street porter, for example, seems to arise not so much from nature as from habit, customs, and education” (32). Smith denies the role of

heredity and genetically-inherited family tradition. In other words, a person emerges as a philosopher neither because he was destined to be a philosopher by the virtue of his birth and parental identity nor because he was divinely gifted with all qualities of being a philosopher. He is rather the product of aforementioned habit, customs, and education.

The sociologist who extended Adam Smith’s theory of ‘division of labor’ is Émile Durkheim (1858-1917) in his *The Division of Labour in Society* (1893) which was his doctoral dissertation. Quoting from *Le Principe de la Morale* (1883) by Charles Secrétan (1815-1895) that “To perfect oneself is to learn one’s role, to make oneself fit to [fulfill] one’s function” (189), Durkheim primarily focuses on the functionalist and moralist reading of division of labor that brings the perfection in social life of laborers. Durkheim argues that “it is by no means demonstrated that civilization is a moral character ... To resolve the question [of morality] ... we should pick out some fact that might serve to measure the average level of morality and then observe its variations as civilization progresses” (12). He studies major metropolitan centers that are also major centers of work force and shows that great number of crimes and anti-social activities take place therein. Besides, social and economic marginalization and gender discrimination prevail therein. It is quite evident that all great centers of ‘civilization’ are worst centers of social injustice, hence immoral. The progress of civilization cannot be assessed without surveying whether morality is guaranteed at all. In other words, economic and technological advancement cannot guarantee the moral advancement of civilization. By focusing on morality of civilization, Durkheim inclines to the Functionalist implication of ‘progress’ that all material advancements must get reflected in the moral and social benevolence of the life of those professionals who form the division of labor in a civilized society. He writes: “We are therefore led to consider the division of labour in a new light. In this case, indeed, the economic services it can render are insignificant compared with the moral effect that it produces, and its true function is to create between two or more people a feeling of solidarity” (15).

Having studied the productive and moral function of division of labor in a civilized, progressive society that is supposed to have given rise social harmony and communal bonding among its laborers who comprise the demography of a respective society, the paper turns into Ambedkarite critique of Hindu caste system that also prescribes its own version of division of labor. Ambedkarism is a religious, social and political ideology named and shaped after the life, writings and activism of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar (1891-1956). It is the most potential theoretical framework to interrogate and critique the Brahminical ideology in India. Its take on caste system and other social and economic injustices has grown in increasing application in academic establishment. A leading Ambedkarite scholar and public intellectual, Gail Omvedt provides a useful definition of Ambedkarism: “‘Ambedkarism’ is today a living force in India ... it defines the ideology of the Dalit movement and, to a large extent, an even broader anti-caste movement ... the urge to abolish the social and economic exploitation involved in caste and capitalism ... is the main significance of Ambedkarism” (224). K. Wilson provides four essential pillars of theoretical basis of Ambedkarism: 1. Caste annihilation; 2. Caste struggle; 3. Religious conversion; 4. Political alternative (27). An eminent Bahujan scholar from Bengal Swapan Kumar Biswas summarizes the theoretical framework of Ambedkar’s philosophy of praxis in the following words: “If economic interpretation of history is the doctrine of Marxism, then democratization of Indian society or the Constitutionalism and Conversionism is the doctrine of Ambedkar” (126).

What is the dichotomy between labor and laborer in caste system that Ambedkarism critiques? With its genesis in the Rigveda (X.190) and canonization in the *Manusmriti* or *Mânava-Dharmaúâstra*, the four-fold classification of Aryan society based on certain professions led to the creation of caste system that later on fixed specific profession for each caste. For our convenience we examine the professions of two polarized castes: Brahmin and Sudra. The *Manusmriti* being the most authorized law book of Hinduism dictates the following: “To Brahmins, he assigned reciting and teaching the Veda, offering and officiating at sacrifices, and receiving gifts ...

A single activity did the Lord allot to the Sudra, however: the ungrudging service of those very social classes” (Olivelle 91). It further dictates that “The king should make ... a Sudra, whether he is brought or not, do slave labor, for the Sudra was created by the Self-existent to do slave labor for the Brahmin” (189). If one says this classification is purely based on division of labor, Ambedkarism counter-argues it and exposes the hidden truth.

In *Annihilation of Caste* (1936), Ambedkar after a careful and thorough analysis of caste system, postulates that in the disguise of division of labor that for a Brahmin the prescribed profession is teaching and for Sudra slavery, caste system promotes division of laborer. The question is: How? Ambedkar expresses his conviction that division of labor is evident in almost all civilized society, including ancient Rome. But what is not usual is that: “... in no civilized society is division of labour accompanied by this unnatural division of labourers into water-tight compartments. Caste system is ... an hierarchy in which the divisions of labourers are graded one after another.... Social and individual efficiency requires us to develop the capacity of an individual to the point of competency to choose and make his own career. This principle is violated in Caste System.... [It] selected not on the basis of trained original capacities but on that of the social status of the parents. “(47)

It means a Brahmin is born as a Brahmin and no matter how low and immoral he might be, he retains his Brahminhood. On the contrary, a Sudra is born as a Sudra and despite his excellent quality and merit he remains a Sudra, i.e. a slave of Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas. To extend this argument, it is quite cognitive that Brahmins and other Twice-born castes hold ‘upper caste’ privileged status for eternity and a Sudra a ‘lower caste’ underprivileged status. In this respect, a Brahmin always find for him a fixed profession that a Sudra cannot claim; at the same time, a Sudra must be happy with the task of slavery which a Brahmin always considers abominable, untouchable and unimaginable. For example, if somebody is a rickshaw-puller, in Hindu social order he has two identities: one, a rickshaw-puller and second, a lower caste rickshaw-puller. At this

stage of analysis, we can see how in the disguise of division of labor Hindu social order promotes 'division of laborer' with fixed social status and profession for so-called upper castes and lower castes respectively.



Fig: 1. Theatrical release poster of *Bhuter Bhabishyat* (Future of Ghosts).

Courtesy: Wikipedia (URL: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhooter\\_Bhabishyat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhooter_Bhabishyat)).

With this theoretical analysis of division of laborer, the primary text, especially a very crucial scene from it will be analyzed to prove that caste-based division of laborer has been justified in the world of ghosts too. *Bhuter Bhabishyat*<sup>1</sup> (Future of Ghosts) is a Bangla-language ghost comedy movie directed by Anik Dutta and released in 2012 in Kolkata. The general storyline of this movie is as follows: the ghosts of Kolkata have faced a severe residential crisis because all old haunted buildings are being demolished by the government. One Chowdhury Mansion remains their last refuge. Ghosts of different religions and professions managed to poke their heads there somehow. But their settlement has been suddenly threatened by Ganesh Bhutoria, a promoter and realty tycoon. He wants to purchase this mansion and turns it into a five-star shopping mall. It raised a serious concern among all ghosts living there. The plot of the story reaches to the climax with all ghosts together invited Ganesh Bhutoria to their ghost mansion, terribly frightened him with their paranormal skills, drove him away from there and in this way disrupted Bhutoria's entire plan. Among the casts there is one Atmaram Paswan.<sup>2</sup> Before his death in

a brutal road accident he used to earn a living by being a rickshaw-puller. Being a ghost Atmaram is shown continuing his same profession. In Chowdhury Mansion his job is to drive other ghosts to market and bring goods back there. Throughout the movie only Atmaram Paswan is shown staying in ground floor, while other ghosts including the owner of this mansion are living on top floors.

This paper chiefly focuses on one particular scene where it is seen that after bringing vegetables and fish from the market in his rickshaw, Atmaram Paswan is going upstairs, carrying a bag full of vegetables to assist Bootnath Bhaduri, another fellow ghost. On his way to upstairs he comes face to face with landlord Darpa Narayan. Having seen Atmaram coming upstairs from his ground floor, the landlord bursts into a thunderous voice and hurled his dire scolding by using the following words: *beta geyo bhut kothakar, nichu jat*,<sup>3</sup> *tui upore thchhis* (You, rustic country ghost! You bloody lower caste! How dare you to come upstairs?) The entire scene turns into dramatic with an altercation among other fellow ghosts protesting and criticizing Darpa Narayan for abusing Atmaram. Although the scene abruptly ends there with Atmaram never allowed to go upstairs, this scene along with other related scenes around Atmaram's character paves the way for a critical study of caste-based identity of ghosts even after death and the application of division of laborers in the world of ghosts. It is apparent that Atmaram's professional identity is based on his labor, i.e. a rickshaw-puller ghost. But the question is: What makes the landlord Darpa Narayan abuse this rickshaw-puller by saying *nichu jat* or lower caste? This question invites other related questions as well.



Fig. 2. A still scene from *Bhuter Bhubishyot* (Future of Ghosts) taken as a screenshot from YouTube video. Courtesy: (link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rCESMAkLwUM#>).

The duration of this scene is 52:45 / 1:59:13. Three characters in this scene (from left) are Darpa Narayan Chowdhury, Bhootnath Bhaduri and Atmaram Paswan. This is the very scene in which Darpa Narayan, the landlord ghost abuses Atmaram, the rickshaw-puller ghost by saying *nichu jat* (lower caste) for coming upstairs.

Is Darpa Narayan an upper caste ghost? If so, can we say all the ghosts living on top floors belong to upper castes? Is there really a caste system prevailing in the world of ghosts? If so, can we say that Atmaram being a ghost becomes a victim of caste discrimination in his ghost life? Can we decode from this scene that marginalization of a man in caste-based society of Bengal has been extended beyond mortal life and a replica of caste system has been justified in afterlife through a delicate plot, that in the name of cinematic culture we have found a dangerous imaginative adventure of film makers and their cinematic plot? All these questions are inseparably related to the ghost character of Atmaram and Darpa Narayan. The Ambedkarite reading of Hindu caste system as already explained helps expose the hidden reality that 'division of laborers into water-tight compartments' the basis of which is caste system has been justified and celebrated in this ghost comedy movie.

The centre/margin conflict is quintessential in Hindu social order. As it has already been examined, the doctrine of creation justifies this division. The great Purusha or Vedic divine creator of the universe and of all species creates Brahmins from his mouth whereas he creates Sudras from his feet (Olivelle 1537-40). From biological perspective this cosmological narrative is as unreal as the stories of tree-climbing cows in popular folktale. But this story of genesis no matter how unreal it might seem has left an imperishable symbolic imprint in Hindu mind. According to Hindus the mouth is the symbol of intelligence whereas feet of menial labor; the mouth is the symbol of centre whereas the feet of margin; the former represents civilization whereas the latter barbarism or paganism. The series of binary with

their symbolic implication gets reflected in Hindu scriptures that form the very basis of their religious culture. This physical polarization between mouth and feet and their symbolic interplay in Hindu mind consolidate the polarization of caste-based identity that a Sudra is bound to be a Sudra despite his professional identity, whether a rickshaw-puller or a doctor. Ambedkar writes: "A Hindu is born in a caste and he dies as a member of that caste. There is no Hindu without caste, cannot escape caste and being bounded by caste from birth to death he becomes subject to social regulations and traditions of the caste over which he has no control" (145). To extend this Ambedkarite interpretation, it is arguable that even after his death a Sudra remains a Sudra ghost and a Brahmin<sup>4</sup> or Kayastha or a Baidya remains the same. The ghosts consequently divide among them both central and marginal spaces after their caste-based identity.

Both Darpa Narayan and Atmaram are ghosts. But their ghost status is determined and certified based on their status in the previous human life. In human life Darpa Narayan was a landlord who was feared by his tenants and revered by his fellow employees. His lavish life-style and social status also attracted many British officers as well. Interestingly it is seen that he retains the same social status even after his death as a privileged ghost. Compared to Darpa Narayan, Atmaram was a rickshaw-puller before his death, living on footpath in Kolkata. His social status and social space remain unchanged after his death. Darpa Narayan inseparably gets stuck into lower caste/upper caste binary. As the caste-based identity of Hindu social order has been studied thoroughly so far, Darpa Narayan is shown to have occupied the centre with the top floor reserved for him whereas Atmaram Paswan margin with ground floor fixed for him in their ghost mansion. In between this spatial dimension the stair seems to be both physical and symbolic passage of breaking the fixed spatial status imposed upon Atmaram. Preventing Atmaram from going upstairs therefore exposes the casteist imagination in this ghost comedy movie.

Division of labor although traceable in almost all civilized society identifies its people after their respective professions. But the caste

system of Hindu society changes the entire discourse of presumed division of labor into 'division of laborer' by injecting its deadly drug of birth-based identical status for each man and woman and identifies its laborer after respective castes. A man born in Sudra family therefore remains the same. *Bhuter Bhobishyot* presents a replica of this typical casteist social categorization of its fellow ghost characters, thus justifying Brahminical system of caste hierarchy and identifying its inmates by either lower caste or upper caste. Since the vertical structure of lower/upper division is fixed and immutable which according to Ambedkar is like 'water-tight compartments' without any interlinking passage between each other, the centre/margin binary as examined between Atmaram and Darpa Narayan gets stuck in a perpetual conflict with the margin trying to break the caste structure by going upstairs, whereas the centre preventing the margin from occupying its place in the centre.

#### End Notes

1. *Bhuter Bhobishyot* is the primary text in this paper. Widely available on YouTube, the present paper follows the following link to get access to it (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rCESMAkLwUM#>).
2. Before his death Atmaram Paswan hails from Bihar. Paswan surname is not found among Bangla-speaking castes.
3. Very often is argued by Brahmin scholars, writers, politicians that Caste system is almost non-existent in Bengal. If it is found, it does not become as harsh and ferocious as found in Hindi-speaking states and South India. But writings of Bahujan scholars not only belie this observation, but expose the caste-based violence both culturally and physically in Bengal. See Biswas, S. K. *Nine Decades of Marxism in the Land of Brahminism*. Calicut, Other Books, 2008. Biswas, Sipra. *Anneswan: Bangali Somajer Swarup*. Vol. 1, Kolkata, Adal Badal, 1996. Biswas, Manoshanta. *Caste Dynamics in India: Social Mobility and Cultural Otherness of the Namasudras of Bengal*. Kolkata, Columbia International, 2018. Biswas, Swapan Kumar. *Untouchable Chandals of India: The Democratic Movement*. New Delhi, Gyan Publishing House, 2013.
4. Brahmin, Kayastha and Baidya are three Brahminical castes who despite having approximately 10% population have reserved 90% resources,

both cultural and political. See Biswas, S. K. *Hari-Guruchand: Banglar Chandal O Bharotborsher Bahujan Abhyutthan*. Delhi, Orion Book, 2002.

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## Quest-A Recurrent Motif in Selected Novels of Saul Bellow: A Study of *Dangling Man* and *Herzog*

Seema Devi\*

### Abstract

Every phenomenon in nature carries a uniqueness; from man, animal to biodiversity of ecology. Man, the most curious and intellectual being among all has evolved to prove his superiority and uniqueness. This uniqueness creates a quest in him and never let him sleep soundly. He remains in search of his identity and existence. Quest for self has been a recurrent motif in literature and covers multiple aspects of human life. Saul Bellow, an intellectual by nature and liberal as an individual has felt this search in inner recesses of his psyche. His works show this search for meaningfulness and existence in this mundane and self-centered world. Present article is an effort to delve deep into the matter of *Dangling Man* and *Herzog* and find a recurrent motif of quest. This quest is in multiplicity of lawyers and emerges in searching of meaning as a man, as an artist of words, as a social being, as an intellectualist, as a metaphysical being and as a Jew also. His protagonists wander in search of this *Kasturi* and finds solace nowhere. They dangle between 'Action' and 'reactions'; to do and what to do. Like the wasteland, they feel the barrenness of philosophy, relations, social structure and even in religious customs also.

**Keywords:** Axiomatically, intellectualist, disintegration, rejuvenation, vacuum.

Literature and art of every era is solely the depiction of man's evolution throughout the ages. Alexander Pope while displaying the complexity of human self, proclaimed man as, "The Glory, Jest, and the riddle of the world". A different perspective was decreed by Harold Kaplan in his utterance, "the idea of man has philosophic centrality" (49). But it is evident that all school of literature dwell on

\* Research Scholar, Faculty of Arts, Crafts and Social Sciences. Tanta University, Ganganagar. Rajasthan. India.

the human self, guessing axiomatically that it is the nub of the activities of an individual. Freudians accept core of this self in instinctual living whereas Jungians agree to take 'collective unconscious' as the heart of the matter. Hegel views it in term of 'universal soul' that is everywhere and Emerson sees it as an 'over soul'. A series of biographical events enwraps this unique essence, according to Rousseau. Marx thinks it as a succession of historical development and establishes it through class-affliction and class-prejudices. Nietzsche philosophizes this concept of quest and says that self is a mask which every individual has to wear. This strong sense of self distinguishes man from all other animals in this planet. Man's sole aim now occurs as the attainment of this self and acquire a sense of completion or perfection. Even Fromm says, "I am driven to do almost anything to acquire this sense" (62). Though in Saul Bellow it proves to be a futile attempt and the protagonist wanders in search of this *Kasturi* every time. This quest infers a journey and an initiative into experience, something persistent, and ever-continuous in literature of all times. Quest for self is the recurrent motif from Jason's expedition for the Golden Fleece and Arthurian legend of holy Grail to the time of Saul Bellow.

Bellow is not a dry intellectualist but he has heard the deep cry of soul in the dark fissures of human sensibility. He firmly asserts the notion, "without the golden age there is no waste land" (Bellow 20). He favors the role of art and announces, "Art is the community's medicine for the worst disease of mind, the corruption of consciousness" (Bellow 178). He firmly favors the path of fight but with dignity. His claim, "I chose comedy as more energetic, wiser and manlier" (Bellow 62) is worth quoting here. His acceptance of disintegration as a fact makes him believe in the exalting, decontaminating and serving effect of suffering in life of everyone as he explains in his Nobel lecture, "... much is disintegrating but we are experimenting also an old kind of refining process" (Bellow 64). Bellow was not really interested in the ultra-modern techniques of Selby, Pynchon and Barth but he was delving deep in the recesses of man psyche and his quest for meaningfulness. So, BrahamJeanne

comments on his protagonists as, "...there are only man who learn" (94). Almost each and every novel of him depicts a man in center who face problem of survival and suffer. With optimism and affirmation, Bellovian man searches for meaning of life and death. His novels constantly focus on quest for material, mental, spiritual and metaphysical meanings of the existence of man in various conditions. Protagonists, here cover multidimensional facets of their character as a man, as a writer, as a Jew and as an intellectual in modern world.

*Dangling Man* (1944) is Bellow's first novel. It concentrates on the quest for freedom by Joseph who inherently is an 'Intelligent Monologist' and this book is also a long series of monologues proposed to be his memories during the state of dangling. A persistent urge for exploration of self takes him to innumerable hidden features of his being which he comes to diagnose while extenuating his violence on Etta. He soars with much hope for life and rejuvenation of his true spirit when he faces temporary vacuum at every step. He remarks, "I must know what I myself am" (99). It is his journey for freedom and quest for real self. The deadening consequences of the adjudicators of this unreceptive world on human sensibility is imitated in true sense of the world. Here, man's apathy to firm positive values occurs to make him transcend the meagerness of the self and society and upsurges above the inconsequential considerations of this materialistic world. Joseph is the personification of that modern man who symbolizes the existential catastrophe of every individual and explores the true self of a man due to man's inhumanity to man, brutal veracities of life and a relentless mugging of his psyche by the forces of torpor. He is a new graduate from the University of Win Costin and a handsome man of twenty-seven years. He marries to beautiful Iva and spends life on her income well.

From the beginning, his predicament is pronounced and the second expression in his name relics always obscure. To suggest the clash of his self, even the definitive article 'The' is also thrown down and it advocates his ambiguous self. He wants to be "a member of the army, but not a part of it" (110). His wait for call from army goes long because of the verification of his identity, being from foreign

nation. Disturbing situation of bureaucrats made his wait too long and left no choice for Joseph but to dangle in mid-way. For a long span of seven months, he remains a 'Dangling Man' between the civilian life and the army. His complete disintegration of self, painful and torturous experience during this interim period and gradual dilemma represents the war generation of same fate. Freedom for which he struggled hard was no less than a "howling emptiness". With the change in situation his all relations change and seem vogue. He stands as 'mulish' to his wife, not an uncle but just 'joseph' to his niece Etta, "my Iva's husband" to his mother-in-law, and his brother takes him as 'the most obstinate, stiff necked jackings' and a loafer to the rigid bank officer. In this world of superficiality where man is known by his position, its Joseph who is in crisis and searching his identity away from position but unfortunately fails.

Ihab Hassan comments about the self of Bellovian heroes goes for Joseph, "Freedom is the provincial goal of their quest, but freedom forces upon them a knowledge of the self, they did not bargain for and self-knowledge discloses to them a world intelligible only in love..." (29). Joseph also tries to be an 'Ideal Man' and a 'True Self'. He tries hard to establish a balance between his true self and social order. If seen in this perspective, this novel shows a great conflict between a highly sensitive man and an absurd social environment where he is placed unwillingly. The quest for right social order, meaningfulness in life, becoming a genuine self and satisfaction of rational mind are the key issues in the life of this dangling man. At the core of the matter, Joseph's struggle to maintain the order of things and solve all the issues while coping with the harsh realities of life. His main cause of desolation and the reason for dispersed self is his true and innocent self. But when he fails to carry this burden, he textures a guilt that there is something "unlawful in being idle in the middle of the day" (11).

To depict the tension of Joseph's troubled mind, Bellow skillfully uses the element of diary. In the absence of any dialogue from the outer world, he just lost in himself and becomes introvert. He is in a single room for above ten hours and wants to have conversation with

a human. The graph of his inner urge discloses when he utters,

In my present state of demoralization, it has become necessary for me to keep a journal that is, to talk to myself and I do not feel guilty of self-indulgence in the least. The hard boiled are compensated for their silence, they fly planes or flight bills or catch tarpon, whereas I rarely leave my room (7).

He tries his best to cut his deadly routine; gets up early; searches for other part time jobs; gets himself tangled in reading and writing, but everything drives in vain. So, Joseph's quest for the 'crux' is the archetypal motif of all Bellowian heroes and Abraham Chapmansays it well: "...Man searching is very close to man lost, but equally close to man found" (285). Gradually he has lost the sense of time and present time ceases to have any meaning for him. He finally is unable to find any remedy for his drudgery and demoralization. Jimmy gives a big shock to him and he feels himself as, "a human grenade whose pin has been withdrawn" (Introduction). Though he attains his temporary reality of being when he articulates- "Hurray for regular hours! / And for the supervision of the spirit! / Long live regimentation" (159).

*Herzog* (1964) deals with intellect as a great virtue that later turns to be a curse in the life of main character. His sincere and ambitious effort to explain, scrutinize and grasp the objective realities of world as well as the 'law of the heart' scatters at last. In the opening of this novel, Herzog returns to Berkshire after his personal and academic life is completely destroyed. It's a journey of Herzog from a crisis and in the process of coping out he realizes the true form of his self. He is persisting the ordeal of his divorce second time and facing a phase of total disaster and disintegration. His survival in this material and impersonal world represents the subsistence of mankind itself. Quest at various angles- quixotic, rational, emotional and as a displaced Jew searching for a stable home, happens to be a recurrent motif in this work. Bellow searches for his own self as a writer also. His torturous soul is pacified in self-mockery when he releases his emotions, "If I am out of my mind, it is all right with me" (11). How pathetic is this 'repose' at which

Herzog has reached after enterprising the sumptuous mental work of re-interpreting and re-viewing his part through a succession of letters which he never dispatched in his life span! His engaging in thinking, writing, and over interpreting takes him to realize, "...solitary thinking that has dislodged him from the world to a dangerous degree. To re-enter he has to pass beyond thought altogether" (Tanner 64). He hurls out in a non-chronological way from his boyhood memories to the crisis with Madeline. Bellow himself is astonished at how a man of his logical abilities can fail as a husband and as a scholar. In the beginning, this "Bookish, callow boy" (242) of sixteen was engrossed with the world of ideas. Herzog recalls his indifference towards his dying mother and was lost in the thought-chain of Darwin, Haeckel, Spencer and Spengler. His involvement in writing of his first book, *Romanticism and Christianity* turns his marital relationship with Daisy into "a heavy silence" (133). He was even focused on to fit together "Bacon and Locke from one side in Methodism and William Blake from the other" (133) while Daisy left him and went for Ohio. This scholar of Romanticism flukes his relation with stable and disciplined Daisy turns his life upside down. So, a Japanese girl deviates his direction and under her tutelage he shows "a taste and talent also for danger and extremism" (12). His alienation from family, friend and society condenses him almost mad and disintegrated.

At last, he textures as "obsessed by the notion of sickness" (Malin 156) and this mental state deteriorates his condition. He struggles hard to maintain his sanity and finds out "Much of my life has been spent in the effort to live by more coherent ideas" (286). Again, he wants to gain stability and coherence through intellectual nature of Madeline but unfortunately this time also he fails. In his appetite for ladies, he tries to find peace and remedy for his tortured soul. But his quest is not gratified in this process and it leads him towards more vacuum. So, this middle-aged professor fails at both levels, intellectual as well as social. Philosophy of Hegel also troubles him now. He, at last observes that it is his ambition to be a 'marvelous Herzog' and that is in the root of all his troubles. It is his 'egotism' and alienation that has led to his being tricked and cuckolded by his

best friend and wife hard heartedly. Ramona comes as a fresh breeze in his life, but only as a few drops of rain to a long-awaited man. Now Herzog has to learn, "Evil is not as in the Christian sense, a metaphysical entity, a satanic malignity. It is real enough but it drives from an ego-centered indifference, from a lack of feeling toward others" (Bezanker 366). So, remark of Peter M. Axthelm is up to mark here, "In Herzog, the hero's life is the quest of a modern Moses for his own promised land" (147).

There is really a thin border line between 'action' and 'reflection'. On one hand, Joseph wants to live on his own principles of life but on the other, Herzog is "contemporary Wordsworth recollecting in tranquility" (Chavkin 9). Joseph feels tragic and pains at heart on glimpse of "there is no dignity anywhere, nothing but absurd falsehood" (123). In his journey towards self-realization, Joseph scuffles hard to withstand moral values and share the belief of Tony Tanner who says, "Somewhere, somehow, the human spirit start to disengage itself, to protect, to assert its needs for true values, for real freedom, for genuine reality" (Tanner 23). On contrary, Herzog does not avow this type of freedom. Despite the 'Sound and Fury' of life, he comes to terms even with his failures. He has a strong belief in the principles of co-existence and brotherhood and asserts, "I really believe that brotherhood is what makes a man human" (280). Thus, it's apparent that Saul Bellow's both protagonists dangle between these two borders of 'action' and 'reaction'. Like Hamlet of Shakespeare, they face conflict of self, but in some different way. They think much but do little and follow the tagline of Kamala Das in her autobiography *My Story*, "One's real world is not what is outside him. It is the immeasurable world outside him that is real. Only the one who has decided to travel inwards will realize his route has no end." So, their quest for meaningfulness in life has touched various aspects of mankind. Notion of family emerges out as a great panacea for the grief-stricken souls. Herzog also declares to Ramona "Be my wife and end my troubles". He thinks marriage as an instrument of salvation for his sins. Quest of a Jew in displaced land is also another side of the picture. Multiplicity of angles in their search comes in form of finding meaning as a writer, as a husband,

as an employee, as a social animal and as a human also. Thus, quest stands as a recurrent motif in both of these works and shows how a brain driven man suffers at all levels and wanders in search of real knowledge to find contentment.

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## Significance of Neuro-Transmitters: Psycho-Somatic Analysis of Han Kang's *The Vegetarian*

Dr. Jaspal Singh\*

Kiranjot Kaur\*\*

### Abstract

The research paper brings under its preview and scrutiny the complex societal functions where individuals are prone to psycho-somatic forms of violence. The study focuses its attention on the central female character Yeong-hye in South Korean society who undergoes a psychological conflict within herself. The mental pictures that she creates determine the fact that brain is the driver and pulls and pushes the physical body in its own way. The analysis also shows how the central female character transforms herself through rigorous mental acrobatics and navigates towards the path from where very few manage to regain a normal self.

**Key-words:** Psycho-somatic, psychological violence, photosynthesis.

The novel, *The Vegetarian* deals with the psychological conflict and journey of the central female character Yeong-hye. She is in psychological conflict with her own self as well as the society. When she decides to stop eating meat, the primal side in Yeong-hye makes her disrespect social norms. Jean Paul Sartre once said that "Existence precedes essence" where humans exist mainly to be the shadows of their essence but some individuals challenge the essential identity and carve their way towards a non-essential identity. Yeong-hye sheds her essence and carves her identity that disturbs the people around her in a big way.

The analysis of the text reveals that we are conditioned to act and react as per the normative values of the society. The food that

\* Assistant Professor, Department of English, Desh Bhagat College, Bardwal, Dhuri (Punjab)

\*\* Research Scholar (English), Punjabi University, Patiala

we eat is a vital link in the essential items of the culture. Yeong-hye falls prey to the cultural normativity where eating food is nothing but eating the meat. The creative contours of the writer present an intense drama where an individual tries to fly above the oppressive and repressive culture but her wings are clipped. It is only through the flight of her fancy that she rises above a fixed identity. The affiliations to culture in a society are the heritage that we carry with us. The cultural doctors seem to feel that the world will fall apart if we go against our identity. Every society tries to make an attempt to impose its cultural norms on every single individual who constitutes a member of that society and, cultural norms need not always be limited to parameters of social behavior. Given such personal factors like food habits often get dictated by the milieu one happens to occupy. The novel, *The Vegetarian* is a case in point. The protagonist of the novel is a South Korean where partaking non-vegetarian food is the accepted norm of food culture. When Yeong-hye tries to break away from this socially accepted practice, she is snubbed and oppressed and ultimately loses her balance of mind and turns into a patient of 'anorexia'.

The textual analysis of *The Vegetarian* shows that the female protagonist, Yeong-hye, undergoes a drastic transformation as the meat-eater in her transforms herself into vegetarian. This all affected her physique in a big way as her cheekbones had become 'indecently prominent' (15). Here mental set-up prompts her to die in starvation. The acidic formulations in her stomach go on ravaging her body "...her stomach acid is eating away at her stomach..." (*The Vegetarian*: 150). She plunged herself into a deep abyss where her physicality starts crumbling "Without make-up, her complexion resembled that of a hospital patient" (*Ibid*). The worrying factor was that it was not a simple case of vegetarianism where people stop eating high calorie diets to reduce weight. However, it was connected with a more psychological drama. "If it had all been just another instance of a woman giving up meat in order to lose weight then there would have been no need to worry, but I was convinced that

there was more going on here than a simple case of vegetarianism”(The Vegetarian: 15-16).

The differences between Yeong-hye and her husband go on mounting as he eats meat and his body smells of meat. She counter-attacks and counter argues him in all the possible ways to cement her own point of view in favour of her new found identity. Then her husband also tries to find the traces of ‘mental abnormality’ by recording the lunatic tendencies in her family if any. “...there didn’t seem to be any strain of mental abnormality lurking in my wife’s bloodline”. (18) Astonishingly, her mother-in-law used to ‘gut a live fish’ (Ibid). He recalls his wife’s tendency when she along with her sister deftly hacks a chicken into pieces “...my wife and her sister were both perfectly competent when it came to hacking a chicken into pieces with a butcher’s cleaver” (Ibid). Most surprisingly, she imposes her own dietary plans on her husband. He tells everything to his mother-in-law on the phone about her daughter’s haphazard dietary changes. He says “And what is more, she ‘s even imposed this ridiculous diet on me-I can’t remember the last time I tasted meat in this house” (27). All the members of her family rebuke her for sticking to vegetarian diet. Her sister in law In-hye also shows her anger “Human beings need certain nutrients...if you intend to follow a vegetarian diet you should sit down and draw up a proper, well balanced meal-plan” (36). The clear patriarchal sound comes out from the mouth of Yeong-hye’s father “If he tells you to eat, you eat! (38). The right to eat the food of one’s own choice is severely hampered and the politics of force dominates.

Yeong-hye’s sudden decision to stop eating meat becomes a family problem as everyone is involved to see Yeong-hye’s non-vegetarian diet. It was Cheong’s father who is most rigid and wanted his daughter to eat as per the choice of her husband. Yeong-hye passes through the crude force of patriarchy and entangles herself in physical and psychological oppression. He resorted to animalistic force to put the piece of meat in her mouth and resultantly she had to be admitted in a hospital after a much debate and drama. So the

novel shows the oppression of women and animals simultaneously. Won Chung Kim opines in this context “In the novel, woman and animal become interchangeable and the oppression of animal and woman goes hand in hand (Kim: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3> ).” In the second attempt, it was her mother who betrayed her senses by mingling some herbal substance with the black goat meat. She could hardly swallow a little of the black substance and her mother’s face was all smiles.

Eating meat is a vital force and energy where we derive all types of strength and energy to face the world. In this context her father says “stop eating meat, and the world will devour you whole” (48). On the other hand, Yeong-hye assumes a philosophical outlook and goes against the practice of meat-eating vehemently. Her thoughts become the active agents and prompt her to go against the normative culture of her family. “The lives of the animals I ate have all lodged there. Blood and flesh, all those butchered bodies are scattered in every nook and cranny, and though the physical remnants were excreted, their lives still stick stubbornly to my insides” (49). Her physicality gets a severe set-back as her body loses the required mass and becomes a gothic-figure “...her body so light she could almost have been a ghost” (66).

The first part of the novel narrated from the perspective of the protagonist’s husband, Cheong is the saga of intense inner and outer conflict in South Korea’s sociological set-up. The narrative may generate a highly contentious debate among vegetarians and non-vegetarians. The question arises whether humans are essentially vegetarians or non-vegetarians. Part Two of the text adds some interesting twists as the protagonist throws a more slight information of her choosing not to eat meat. She adds “I dreamed of a face” (90). The situation becomes more dramatic when she tries to involve herself in the process of photosynthesis. It is an extreme psychological deviation from the normal self where only plants go through the process of photosynthesis to make their own food without taking any outside help. This kind of link between causality

and casualty of a dream can be a serious debate as a long chain of reactions are likely to come out of this psychological debate. As Jung says "...why does this particular person dream this particular thing? He must have his specific reasons, otherwise there would be a breakdown in the law of causality" (Dreams: 4).

Yeong-hye time and again, mentions the dream that becomes the leitmotif in this text. It comes out from it that sometimes humans are governed by dreams. Their mental set-up is the driver that propels the engine of her body. The incidence of photosynthesis is also because of the dream factor as one of the characters asks "...why did you use to bare your breasts to the sunlight, like some kind of mutant animal that had evolved to be able to photosynthesize" (91).

Her present predicament is the predicament of extremes where she will only make her survival possible through the rays of the sun. "On sunny days she would press herself up against the windows, unbutton her hospital gown and bare her breasts to the sun." (138). She declares emphatically her decision not to live on food where her sister brings for her some eatables. "Sister, you don't have to bring that stuff now...I don't need to eat anymore" (147). She feels as if she has started turning into a tree. Her thoughts try to change her physiological needs "I need to water my body. I don't need this kind of food, sister. I need water." (148).

The last part of the novel 'Flaming Trees' shows Yeong-hye to be throwing herself into the pool of psycho-somatic disturbances. Her brain acts in such a way that she never seems to go back to her earlier state of mind. This part of the text is narrated through the perspective of Yeong-hye's sister. This section again focuses on the new found identity of Yeong-hye. Her rebellious nature is built on the experiences of her childhood when she was an adamant child who only listened to herself at crucial junctures. As Han Kang opines "Even as a child, In-hye had possessed the innate strength of character necessary to make one's own way in life" (139). The best in her could be perceived in different roles of her life. Whatever she did in past, she did it with great dexterity, skill and confidence "As a daughter,

as an older sister, as a wife and as a mother, as the owner of a shop, even as an underground passenger on the briefest of journeys, she had always done her best" (Ibid).

The mental disease that Yeong-hye suffers from is 'anorexia nervosa'. The cultural doctors advise her to stick on to non-vegetarian diet but anorexia nervosa in her makes her feel contempt for this dietary plan and she prepares to consume nothing thereafter. As one of the doctors at the psychiatric wing lays bare the truth about this disease "I know, I told you this last time, but fifteen to twenty percent of anorexia nervosa patients will starve to death" (140). The condition becomes grimmer and grimmer because the patient does not at all get to know the weight reducing in her body "Even when they are down to nothing, but skin and bone, the subject is still convinced that they've put on weight" (Ibid).

Yeong-hye has become a kind of riddle for the entire medical fraternity because the doctors fail to ascertain the cause why she has refused to eat and why the medicine is not showing effect on her "But we're still not sure why exactly it is that Kim Yeong-hye is refusing to eat, and none of the medicines we've given her seem to have had any effect" (141). The disease in her is such that it keeps her aloof from the feeling of being weak and feeble. She behaves normally in such a condition where the people around her have a sense of bewilderment over the sense of no disease at all. "In the taxi on the way, there she'd gazed quietly out of the window, showing not even the slightest hint of unease, and when they sent the taxi away, she'd obediently followed her sister as though they'd simply come out for a stroll" (143). The dialogue delivery by Yeong-hye is full of strange mental pictures. At one point, she sees a biological connection among all the trees "Sister, all the tree, of the world are like brothers and sisters" (144). The dream that Yeong-hye had is very difficult to interpret as its psychological contours are difficult to find out and pinpoint.

The analysis of the character of Yeong-hye reveals the fact that her very demeanour represents the complexity of human

psychology. The medical condition that she confronts indicates the fact that people suffer from long chain of bizarre mental diseases ranging from schizophrenia, Alzheimer's, hypomania and many more. They travel in a different world where they enter a gender-less society showing no signs of biological differences. They are just humans in this strange condition living in their own mental spaces. Yeong-hye prepares herself for a new kind of existence where she will get her food from sunlight. As she says "I don't need to eat, not now. I can live without it. All I need is sunlight" (154). This is one of the most striking dialogues uttered by Yeong-hye as it determines the contours of her psychological self-getting into the labyrinth. Out of this human psychological complexity, arises one more complexity that remains an area of study for psychologists who recognize one more feature of human psyche that may work at the extreme level of eccentricity. Han Kang performs the role of a psychological script writer and touches upon the one of the unsaid things about the human existence. As Teju Cole opines "...there are many others who also show us that human sensibility is more than we might have guessed (50)". Han Kang, through this text, produces wonderful specimens of humans' tactical and emotional devices that stabilize and destabilize the notions of truth involved with life patterns.

The character of Yeong-hye has also been presented in a bad light by Ioana Alexandrescu deeply analyses the character of Yeong-hye and ends up opining that Yeong-hye is not a noble soul throughout the text as she dangles between the world of flesh and fancy where she betrays her own sister by sleeping with her husband. Ioana opines "by sleeping with her brother-in-law, Yeong-hye's urge for purity becomes a sinful taboo breaker" (Alexandrescu).

The ways of Yeong-hye's mind are such that they pull her into the world of vegetarian acceptance of life where the existence of tress seems to her to be an appropriate place to live "The innumerable trees she had seen over the course of all her life, the undulating forests which blanket the continents like a heartless sea, envelop her exhausted body and lift her up" (169). The writer at the end of the

novel makes the character of Yeong-hye a bundle of mysteries to the people around her because people and her family fail to understand what might be her next round of actions as she is not yet willing to go back to her previous style of living. "What is stirring behind those eyes? What is she harboring inside her, beyond the reach of her sister's imagination? What terror, what anger, what agony, what hell?" (181). So the contours of her psychological self reach their own phase of the bizarre development of the functioning of the human mind. Her actions and reactions as shown in the text are very difficult to interpret.

The regressive forces have over swayed the progression that everyone goes through in different phases of life "Is Yeong-hye trying to turn herself back into a pre-adolescent." (151). She starts leading a paradoxical existence where her progression becomes regression as the vitality of her life is derailed and she goes against her own body by introducing in her thoughts a strange psychic condition that only jeopardises her individual self. Again to quote Ioana "...if she repeatedly takes her clothes off it is because in her becoming she needs more sun and clothes stop her from receiving it to the fullest, while regression means finding again that context in which nakedness is obligatory and unprovocative: the moment of the newborn's arrival" (Alexandrescu). Medically speaking, the secretion of chemicals in her brain makes her do and think such kind of activities and from here on she enacts the drama with more pungent techniques that lay bare her personality as a mentally abnormal creature.

At the end of the text, Yeong-hye's sister comes with a wake-up call and asks her sister to come out of her dream as the dream-ridden life may not lead her anywhere "I have dreams to, You know. Dreams...and I could let myself dissolve into them, let them take me over...but surely the dream isn't all there is? We have to wake up at some point, don't we?" (182). Her sister talks to her as if she is talking to normal and mentally fit person but she does not know that her sister is suffering from a mental disorder—anorexia nervosa.

The very complexity of human psyche is given a vivid description through the portrayal of Yeong-hye whose life loses the normal equilibrium as she rides on the kind of mental plain where the law of complete surrender before one's own self creates ripples in her otherwise calm personality.

The writer through the character of Yeong-hye seems to preach the readers to adopt a vegetarian life style. The writer also seems to suggest the idea that when we go against the cultural ideologies we are likely to face rebellion and resultantly suffer intensely. The essential socio-cultural practices are embedded in our psyche in such a way that we cannot get detached from them.

Han Kang scatters the colours of her creativity by creating the situation where the central female character Yeog-hye switches herself off vegetarianism and the after effects of her actions provide a complex trajectory of human existence. Yeong-hye carries her emotions against non-vegetarian food to such an extent that she crosses the fine boundary between normal and abnormal behavior. So much so that she begins to imagine herself a tree. Her affinity with vegetation makes her lose her balance of mind and the novel, *The Vegetarian* becomes a clear example of how fixations often drive a person to the brink of madness. At last, it can be concluded that Yeong-hye wants to live but wants to live differently. Her very non-essential identity is a new chapter in her life that creates for her the chances to start her life with a different approach. The creative approach adopted by the writer in delineating the character of Yeong-hye is a step towards portraying a non-stable identity.

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## Satyajit Ray-The Last Renaissance Man of Bengal

*Sanjukta Bala\**

### *Abstract*

Renaissance as a reform movement began in Italy during the period of 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century. European renaissance was a time of transition, a sort of a bridge that links Medieval Europe to that of Modern Europe. Change and experiment are key concepts that characterize Renaissance. Such a radical movement also took place in India and specially the cultural capital Bengal. Bengal Renaissance is marked by reform – cultural, social and religious. It starts with Raja Ram Mohan Roy (1772–1833) and ends with Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941). But many believe that this movement of change and reform continued till the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century and the great film maker Satyajit Ray is the last Renaissance man of Bengal. This man of multiple talent and vivid imagination experimented with the craft of film making. From choosing his subject to implementing new and innovative methods of storytelling Satyajit Ray altered the traditional ways of film making. His women characters, his understanding of urbanity and civilisation, his criticism of modernity show that here's a man who in the truest sense a renaissance man challenging many orthodoxies and altering ways of thinking.

**Key words:** Bengal Renaissance, Satyajit Ray, cinema, modernity.

Bengal Renaissance is a time of change; a change from old dogmatic temperament toward an attitude that can be termed as modern. Literary giants, social reformers, scientists and artists they have all in their respective fields brought about change through experimentation and innovation. The British effect is undeniable when we speak of Bengal Renaissance. The colonial period is instrumental in enriching our stalwarts in knowledge of new arts and sciences. But

there is another aspect that marks Bengal Renaissance as something very unique in its preoccupation with traditional knowledge. The Renaissance man should be one of numerous talents, a person deeply engaged in creating experimental work, one who effortlessly walks through the western as well as the eastern branches of knowledge and practices. Judged by these criteria Rabindranath Tagore stands tall among the Bengal renaissance literary figures. But when we search for a doorway that lead us to Satyajit Ray and marks him as a Renaissance man we invariably come to the predecessors of Ray himself. Ray writes in *My Years with Apu- A Memoir*: “My father and grandfather had never held jobs. Grandfather Upendra Kishore was a true Renaissance man, who wrote, painted, played the violin and composed songs. He was a pioneer in half –tone block making and founded a printing press which soon established itself.” (3)

Both Sukumar Ray and Satyajit Ray were men of varied talents. Satyajit himself was a painter. He studied painting in Shantiniketan under the guidance of Nandalal Basu. He played musical instrument, had deep knowledge of both Indian as well as Western music. As he once confessed that at the age when Bengali youth were almost inevitably writing poetry, he was listening to European classical music. He writes in *Our Films, Their Films*: “My three years in Shantiniketan had opened my eyes and ears to our artistic and musical heritage, so that in addition to buying records of symphonies and concerts, I was now regularly going to concerts of Indian Classical music.” (Introduction)

Not only music in his idea of art and most importantly in his perception of cinema he shows tremendous amount of respect to western models. He says in *Speaking of Films* (Bishoy Chalachitra): Among the paintings and sculptures I knew and loved were: Gainsborough's Blue Boy, Franz Hal's Laughing Cavalier, Michelangelo's David, Robin's Thinker, Landseer's Proud Stag...Of course I knew Raphael's Madonna, Da Vinci's Mona Lisa. (10) And in that very book he confesses of his dislike of oriental sentimentalism reflected in art forms: “I strongly disliked the wishy-washy sentimentalism of Oriental art one encountered in the pages of Probashi

\* Assistant Professor, Department of English, Basirhat College

and Modern Review” And in the context of cinema these lines by Avijit Sen published in the essay *Western Influences on Satyajit Ray* give us an idea of Ray’s cinematic vision-One major factor appears to be that Ray had learnt his art mainly from the Western cinema. The directors he repeatedly referred to, while talking about filmmaking, were Jean Renoir, Vittorio De Sica, John Ford and Frank Capra to name a few. He had also expressed admiration for directors as diverse as Bergman and Hitchcock. (1)

This amalgamation of both Eastern and Western influence that is so central to Ray’s creation is actually a characteristic trait of Bengal Renaissance. Here I quote Avijit Sen once more to show that Ray in his attitude to both oxidant and orient embodies the essence of a Renaissance man: The merger of the East and the West gave birth to the Bengali Renaissance and to the educated middle-class of which Ray and his family was an integral part. This fusion of the East and the West is deeply embedded in Ray’s art— the same kind of fusion one can find in Rabindranath Tagore’s humanistic fusion of classical Indian tradition and Western liberal thoughts. . David Ansen (Newsweek, 1981), the film critic of the Newsweek once wrote that few film artists could equal “the Renaissance man” for sheer cultural depth, which Ray possessed innately. How, when and where did he pick up such influences which eventually impacted on his art and craft, is an intriguing and an interesting question. (1)

Now we come to his films, an art form he is most known and admired for. He not only experimented with the technique of film making he brought in radical changes in subject matter of a film, especially Bengali film. He despised the films that were being made at his time as those films were far from the realities of life, seldom explored the intricacies of characters and their situations. They were mostly melodramatic with little or no depth. Author Keya Ganguly quotes Ray in her book *Cinema, Emergence and the Films of Satyajit Ray* : what we can do and do profitably is to explore new themes, new aspects of society, new facets of human relationship. But if you want to do that, and be serious and artistic about it, you cannot afford to sugar your pill or the masses who are used to tasty morsels of make belief. (5)

Yes, he didn’t sugar coat his pills, his films represent the realities as he saw it, as he perceived it. He directed 36 films which explore various aspects of human life, these can be seen as documents of a time, a criticism of many orthodoxies and finally a critique of the perceived modernity. Having a true Renaissance spirit he focused on exceptional representation of women protagonists (*Charulata, Mahanagar, Ghare Baire*), advocated science and rationalism (*Mahapurush, Ganashatru*). But he didn’t limit himself within the very peripheries of Renaissance mentality, he became an extraordinary film maker when he portrayed man’s relationship with and within nature in his *Apu Trilogy*, critiqued modernity (*Shimabadhho, Pratidwandi, Shakha Proshakha, Jana Aranya*), presented marginal subjects with sympathy (*Aranyer Din Ratri, Agantuk, Sadgati*). If we look closely enough we would discover a hidden story line underneath the films he made. Like no other film maker of Indian origin Satyajit Ray developed another narrative beneath the varied narrative discourses of his films. It was a deliberate investigation and criticism of social structures that give rise to definite power equations.

When we speak of power equations the gender issue comes invariably at the very beginning as Ray directed a host of female oriented films right at the beginning of his career. In his portrayal of women characters he differed from almost all of his contemporary directors. He differed in breaking the stereotypical representation of female characters on celluloid. Ray time and again went to Tagore’s stories when he intended to portray his women on screen. The way Tagore presented the sensibility and integrity of Bengali women Ray too followed the same route. He demystified the Hindu ideal of a perfect woman and presented her as a human being of flesh and blood, of merit and intellect and established her triumph amidst unjust patriarchal system. From 1960 to 1965 he directed six films and in all of them Ray gave us exceptional portrayal of female characters. In 1960 his *Davi (The Goddess)* was released. It is a story of Dayamoyee, a wife in a traditional upper class Bengali family. She as the wife of the youngest son of the family is loved by all and especially by the head of the family Kalikinkar Choudhuri as she takes care of him. One day Kalikinkar dreams of Dayamoyee as a living incarnation of Goddess

Kali. Kalinkar decides to worship her as the Goddess. Though it may seem that she is given a position of power but in reality she loses her right of a human being. Her life is controlled and directed by the powerful patriarchal hands of her father-in-law. Though her husband comes back to save her but she declines to get back to a normal life as she herself begins to believe that she is indeed a Goddess.

The horrible death of Khoka follows showing us the consequences of a system that is largely controlled by mindless patriarchy. Ray's attack on Hinduism reminds us of those social reformers of Bengal Renaissance who tried to change the doctrines laid by religion that limit freedom and self expression. The following year in 1961 Ray directed a *Teen Kanya (Three Daughters)*, a set of three films where women are the central characters. Ratan, Manimalika and Mrinmoyee are all exceptional women characters who in different ways develop and evolve under the patriarchal gaze. Ratan in *Postmaster* works as a caretaker of newly appointed postmaster Nandalal. Ratan being a very caring young girl begins to look forward to this man who teaches her, admires her and addresses her as his sister. But when time comes he takes transfer to Kolkata forgetting completely of Ratan's struggle, her admiration for this man and her emotions. When Ratan hears the news she feels sad but at the same time refuses to accept the money Nandalal offers and walks away from him with a sense of indifference. Manimalika and her obsessive love for jewels in *Monihara (The Lost Jewels)* make her a character that is not identical with traditional women characters. She refuses to give her jewels to husband in moment of crisis. Phanibhusan's asking of the jewels is a hint of the authority that he holds over her and her refusal to do that is her reaction against that authority. Mrinmoyee in *Samapti (The Conclusion)* is one fierce character who refuses to conform to the rules of patriarchy and the model of femininity. She climbs trees, plays with boys, and disgusts the idea of becoming an all abiding wife. She initially runs away from the house of her husband and refuses to go back. It is love that later changes her attitude not patriarchy. *Mahanagar (The Big City)* is released in 1963. This is set in urban Kolkata. The central character of Arati belongs to the urban middle class Bengali family where it is

unconceivable to have a working woman. Breaking the walls of patriarchy Arati gets a job of a sales woman. Ray not only shows a confident Bengali working lady who goes to work and develops a strong sense of individuality and integrity he also gives a picture of a middle class Bengali man who still is not comfortable with the idea of an emancipated woman. Presentation of Bengali men on screen is where Ray is again sets example. In the book *The Cinema of Satyajit Ray-Between Tradition and Modernity* Darius Cooper writes, In the portrayal of Indian men on the other hand, he reveals to us their cowardice and shallowness as they take shelter in male-dominated social institutions and hegemonic structure.(11)

In 1964 *Charulata (The Lonely Wife)* comes to theatre and we are exposed to the absolute brilliance of Ray's cinematic vision. Ray himself thought this film is his best film in his entire career. *Charulata* is the wife of a journalist in an upper class Bengali family. Her love for poetry is looked down upon by her husband. The lack of love and admiration in the marriage results in her closeness to Amal, an aspiring writer. Though a fulfilling relationship grows between them Amal too fails to understand her. Amal does not reciprocate to her feelings and also a little uncomfortable of *Charulata's* talent as a better writer than himself. *Charulata* is a film that focuses on the emergence of modern upper class women of colonial India.

Film critics and analysts believe that Ray's choice of material in his films is largely based on what was happening around him at his time. Modernization, industrial revolution, the so called progress characterise the post colonial India. India now is taking its strong steps forward towards modernity. Ray is critical of the so called modernity and its influence over the individual this modernity is going to cause. That's why in the early 70s Ray directed films that largely are criticism of modernity. Darius Cooper observes in the book *The Cinema of Satyajit Ray-Between Tradition and Modernity* : From *Pather Panchali* to *Jana Aranya*, Ray's films record, sometimes ruefully and sometimes dispassionately, the inevitability of change ("progress") and all that it entails. But even if there is nostalgia for the past, there is no sentimentality in Ray's rendition of the gradual movement of one

era into another. If over the years, Ray's vision of life has progressively darkened, it is because the realities that he confronts in post-Tagore, post colonial India are harsh and unsettling. (12)

In the light of this observation we realise Ray's conscious will to comment and criticise over matters that are contemporary. In between 1970 and 1975 Ray directed four films: *Pratidwandi* (*The Adversary*, 1970), *Aranyer Din Ratri* (*Days and Nights in the Forest*, 1970), *Seemabaddho* (*Company Limited*, 1971), *Jana Aranya* (*The Middleman*, 1975). In these films Ray makes us face the realities of the modern time. The Naxal movement and its subsequent failure, the Emergency period provide the setting of these films. In *Pratidwandi*, the central character of Siddhartha Chowdhury presents the doubt, the conflict, the disillusionment and the dissatisfaction of the modern youth. His failure to obtain a decent job, his inability to articulate his feelings, his hesitant nature brings forward an image of modern man that is deeply troubling. Ray in this film adopts a very different type of storytelling. Dream sequences, flash backs and playful flash forwards – all suggestively and accurately portray the time and the characters. In *Aranyer Din Ratri* Ray attacks the corporate world. Ashim's confession "the more you rise, the more you fall" gives us a glimpse into the glossy world of the businessmen and its inherent decay. Shyamal's character in *Seemabaddho* is similar with Ashim's. Shyamal is an ambitious sales manager of a British firm. In order to secure his promotion to the next level he bags a huge export deal. But when things turn worse for him as his products turn out to be faulty he deliberately creates a conflict among the workers. He saves himself but his guilty conscience isolates him. In *Jana Aranya* the protagonist suffers a similar fate. Somnath is an educated young man of a middle class family. His aspiration to get a job during the turbulent times makes him compromise on his principles. And to hold on to the job he even stoops lower and lower morally. While the men show lack of moral courage and are emotionally paralyzed the women in these films are emotionally stable and morally upright. When directors were busy making melodramas with exaggerated portrayals of Bengali youth Ray was consciously sketching characters that are real. These young men are representing

a time of transition. Modernity is creeping in and with it innocence and the sense of morality is fading away. Ray pulls us out of our make belief world of fantasy and romance and awakens us to the realities of the changing time.

Now we come to the last decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century. Ray directs his final trilogy attacking the well established middle-class Bengali sensibility. *Ganashatru* (*An Enemy of the People*, 1989), *Shakha Proshakha* (*Branches of the Tree*, 1990), *Agantuk* (*The Stranger*, 1991)- in these films Ray's attack on modernity reaches a new level of intensity. Here he 'partitions his bhadrolok self and tries to create new "marginal" selves who can on his behalf, assault the bastions of the middle class "centre" in an attempt to bring it to its knees.' (Cooper). Ray's extraordinary vision is forcing us to question what civilization is all about. In *Ganashatru* we have an honest doctor Ashoke Gupta who warns the people about the poisonous water of the local temple which is not only considered holy but at the same time a source of income for many. Ashoke Gupta's efforts to save the people turn futile under the greed and religious fanaticism of the people and the system of power politics and thus turning him into an enemy. In *Shakha Proshakha* Ray presents on screen three generations of a single family. The head Ananda Majumdar lived an honest life and succeeded as an industrialist. But two of his sons lead corrupt lives and the problem is that they no longer question their moral degradation. In *Agantuk* Ray presents an interesting character who after spending 35 years outside his country returns to Kolkata. He stays temporarily in the house of his niece; this is a typical upper middle class household. Through the character of Monomohon Mitra Ray shatters the middle class belief systems regarding science, progress, urbanity and modernity and finally civilization itself. Ray tries to dismantle the power equation between the centre and margin by raising issues of war, destructive scientific innovation, capitalism and the lack of spiritual regeneration. Shyam Benegal writes in the book *Satyajit Ray on Cinema*: Here was a film (Pathar Panchali), the like of which I had never seen before. And here was a film maker who had broken free of the conventions of both Hollywood and Indian cinema. Satyajit Ray had shattered the mould that had

bound film makers in India to a form of film making that had remained unchanged since the introduction of sound. (x)

Ray's style of movie-making both in terms of subject matter and technique has taken cinema, the art form, to a whole new level. This is for the first time an Indian film maker, thinks Benegal, in his film language and idiom becomes a connecting link between the traditional and the modern. Ray's films have believable locations, cultural specific people and places which all seem familiar. Yet in the delineation of the characters and their intricacies and intimacies Ray adopts the modern methods. In this amalgamation of the traditional with the modern Ray becomes a true figure of Bengal Renaissance. His sensibilities and techniques has brought Indian cinema to the world stage. Benegal, another master film maker rightly observes: If there is a single contribution of Satyajit Ray to the world of Indian cinema it would be the path he created for Indian cinema to break free from being self-referential and imitative of subjects largely lifted from Hollywood films... There are many areas of film making where his influence has been felt in greater or lesser degree whether in acting style, photography, production design, the use of sound and even in the creation of music scores which were rarely thematic before his time. (xi)

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## Higher Education System and Quality Teaching in India

Dr. Richa Mehta

### Abstract

The higher education system and quality teaching in India have been illustrated in the present paper. The higher education framework involves having a hypothetical basis for the teaching and learning methods of the OECD IHME policy of advanced education. The present paper has reviewed literature and the findings are based on the three main parts comprising the three main pointers: 1. Quality teaching, 2. Ways to amplify teaching methods, and 3. Quality assurance in higher education is brought into the discussion. Although, the literature does not specify the exact definition of quality teaching.

**Key Words-** Quality Teaching, OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development), IHME (Institutional Management in Higher Education)

### Introduction

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) is an international organization working to create better policies for a better life. Their aim is to form policies for all that promote prosperity, equality, opportunity, and well-being. Together with governments, policy makers, and people, OECD work to develop international standards based on evidence and to find solutions to problems related to social, economic, and environmental factors. It provides a unique platform and information hub for data and analysis, exchange of perspectives, best-practice sharing, and guidance on public policies and international standard-setting, from enhancing economic growth and job development to supporting strong education and combating international tax evasion.

Institutional Management in Higher Education (IHME) offers a valuable platform where it is essential to interpret, discuss and

\* Department of Education Lady Irwin College University of Delhi

widely disseminate the policies and activities driving vibrant higher education systems. IMHE provides policy and platforms to OECD higher education leaders who face unstable and globally changing situations every day.

Teacher quality is the most significant factor deciding student success. As per Indian view, Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Minister of State for Human Resource Development, announced (on 20 August 2013) that the Government of India has adopted a three-pronged strategy to improve the standard of school teachers, which includes (i) the strengthening of teacher education institutions, (ii) the revision of the teacher education curriculum in accordance with the 2009 National Teacher Education Curriculum Framework, and (iii) the establishment of minimum teacher education qualifications and their continuing professional growth. It is crucial that Indian products should be produced in a way that eventually ensures other countries' competitiveness. The higher education system and the universities of the same as competent as graduates of any other country, not as in academic achievements but also in terms of the moral and ethical inbuilt in their personalities.

### Higher Education System in India

According to AISHE 2019-20, the total number of universities are 1043, number of colleges are 42343 and 11779 are the stand Alone Institutions which are listed on the portal of AISHE. But during the survey only 1019 Universities, 39955 Colleges and 9599 Stand Alone University have reported to AISHE. Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for the age group of 18-23 years in Higher Education in India is 27.1. GER for males and females is 26.9 and 27.3 respectively. GER for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are 23.4 and 18.0 respectively as compared to the National GER which is 27.1. 49% of the total enrolment is composed by females according to the AISHE 2019-20. Nearly 85% of the students got enrolled in humanities, science, commerce, engineering and technology, Medical science, and IT and computer. The total enrolment and GER is improving on the basis of a year-on-year, another report has been published that the pupil teacher ratio (PTR) in universities as well in colleges is 28

in 2019-20 which was 29 in 2018-19. The country was expected to achieve GER higher education at 30 percent by 2020, with an estimated 7 percent growth in the last decade. Although there will always be a large amount of eligible high school students who will find it difficult to enter higher education (Sharma, 2018). The country is expected to increase the existing tertiary education enrollment by five times. The institutional capacity will be expanded by three times in the coming years (India's Education Policy, 2018).

### Quality Teaching in India

As the paradigm of higher education has undergone continuous changes, quality teaching has become a topic of significance. The student body, both socially and geographically, has grown and diversified considerably. Modern technologies have changed the interactions between students and professors, as modernization has brought changes in almost all the sectors, therefore the new generation also needs new strategies and new ways of teaching practices in the classroom. The government, students and their families, and the fund providers expect value for their cash and want more productivity by teaching. Literature doesn't define the term quality teaching but described in the following ways:

- \* A property/ characteristics of a teacher.
- \* An outcome in the failure and success of students.
- \* Empathizing nature of teachers towards their students makes them good teachers.
- \* Teachers who have a passion for learning, for their students, and in the classroom make them excellent teachers.
- \* Teaching depends on what is being taught to the students.
- \* Student-centered, its objective is for the best of student learning.

Suzana Viasic, Smiljana Vale Danijela Krizman Puhar (2009) stated that in every country, the knowledge of education is development and advancement. The recent situation of the Croatian education system and the efficiency of its components have become visible, such that those who are directly or indirectly connected to and use education services, consider its value positively. It can be accomplished

through creativity, democratic values, knowledge, daily life activities and skill which can be further required for professional life. To achieve the quality objectives it is important to plan, monitor, assure and enhance the designed principles of quality control (Satsangi, 2016).

A study was conducted from graduate and postgraduate students of different colleges and institutions of Agra on the topic "To assess the higher education system in India" by Falguni Satsangi in 2016 which was based on a framework of Curriculum and its enhancement; establishment of courses and strategies; fostering social values; professional abilities; and understanding the use of modern technologies. The result showed that "very good" was the overall perception of students regarding teaching quality in higher education. Out of 237 students, 51 students answered "Excellent" and 81 students replied, "V. good". "105 students were "healthy" and only three students replied with "bad." The total weight-age score is 3,621, which means that "good" is the standard of education in higher education in India.

The success of any educational institute is proportional to the educator's teaching methods. Teachers are the crucial part of the developing society as more or less but social changes come from them. The standard of higher education is therefore dependent on the standard of those who relate it to. As the environment of higher education has undergone continuous changes, quality teaching has become an important issue: increased international competition, demands for value for money, the social and geographical diversity of the student body, the implementation of information technology, etc (Roy, 2016).

### Ways to Amplify Quality Teaching Methods

Teachers play a very important role in improving quality teaching of higher education in the following ways:

- \* **Motivation:** Teacher's play a vital role in enhancing the quality of education at all levels. Their devotion and dedication should serve as a motivational force to build an environment in such a

way where students can uplift to think critically and decide actions on circumstances and challenges carefully (Nagoba & Mantr, 2015).

- \* **Development of skills:** A significant aspect of enhancing the standard of higher education among students is skill development. Consequently, the need for higher education standards that are globally accepted is visible. Therefore, it is very important to train students to attain core competencies in order to effectively fulfill global requirements. In order to ensure skill development among students, teachers need to be imaginative, creative, and entrepreneurial in their approach (Nagoba & Mantr, 2015).
- \* **Imparting value-based education:** Teachers should inculcate the value systems among the students in the classroom. India is a country of diversity and cultural heterogeneity, so it is important for the students to learn all the levels, follow acceptable values proportional with social, cultural, economic, and environmental realities (Nagoba & Mantr, 2015).
- \* **Steps to carry out successful quality teaching (Roy, 2016):**
  - a) Identification of the problem: The professor must think about the shortcomings of his teaching.
  - b) Gathering of data: The professor should have the knowledge of literature, and overview with mentors or students.
  - c) Setting objectives: The professor must select a project to work on.
  - d) Strategies should be developed and implemented to achieve the already setted objectives.
  - e) Assessment of the project, both qualitative and quantitative.
- \* **Empower students as active learners:** The best way to enhance the quality and standard of education is to involve students as a learner rather than their role in the classroom just as a watcher. Active learning is a process where students are part of the learning process where they interact and, participate in the class, and collaborate with each other. Teachers should use the ways of using active learning strategies to promote

independent, rational, and creative thinking (Fedena, 2020).

- \* **Promoting access and equity:** These are the most serious problems that need to be dealt with as quickly as possible. In order to provide access and equality, geographical, religious, financial and caste inequalities have to be eliminated. To encourage access and fairness for all the groups participating in the teaching-learning process, different welfare systems for different groups must be implemented (Hoque, 2018).
- \* **Vigilance and surveillance or inspection:** For all public sectors, surveillance or oversight is essential; it may be in government offices or in schools or colleges. Sudden visits or routine inspections would definitely boost the efficiency of school or college departments. Strict action must be taken in this case if any anomalies are detected (Hoque, 2018).

### Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Quality assurance requires the systematic review of the provision of education to sustain and strengthen its quality, equity, and efficacy. This involves self-evaluation of the school, teacher, and student evaluations. Quality assurance can be done in the following ways:

- \* **Self-evaluation:** Self-evaluation is the only way to ensure real, long-term quality and this helps to determine the capabilities and limitations of the individual. Self-evaluation is more like gazing in a “mirror.” Inspection and quality control enforced from the outside would not work, therefore the self-study report needed for submission at the time of accreditation evaluation should be self-critical and introspective (Frazer, 1992). Self-evaluation would be a first step toward assuring quality and a sign of ongoing development (Mishra, 2007).
- \* **Benchmarking:** Benchmarking is a term used in education to describe a series of evaluation exams given during the academic year to determine whether pupils are fulfilling certain academic criteria or not. Benchmarking is critical for assessing students’ academic progress and developing customized curricula to meet each student’s unique learning requirements (Writer, 2020).

Setting measurable standards for assessing one’s learning is what academic benchmarks entail. These can be set for students or institutions for ranking or comparing one with another. An academic benchmark can be established before starting a course with the collection of concepts in order to ensure that students will learn those at the end of the course. Benchmarking helps teachers to identify pupils’ strengths and shortcomings, which may then be used to shape future lessons. Higher education institutions utilize comparable processes and practices, thus functional benchmarking comparisons are conducted between them. An example of best practice might be the fact that Z institution has a 100% placement rate for its graduates. It might serve as a model for others, and every Higher Education institution should try to meet it. The NAAC standards can be used to compare and benchmark universities (Mishra, 2007).

- \* **External Quality Assurance:** External quality assurance reassures external stakeholders such as employers, professional organisations, and the general public of a higher education institution’s legitimate quality. It also provides an unbiased and objective way for a peer panel that is not affiliated with the educational institution to evaluate the institution. The external quality assurance method is a widely contested subject in India, especially because universities are independent entities authorised to grant degrees by an Act of Parliament or a State Legislature. External monitoring is frequently viewed as an imposition on one’s “autonomy” and “academic freedom.” The University Grants Commission (UGC) already monitors institutions on a regular basis for financing purposes, and so no more involvement is required. According to some Indian academics, EQM is a borrowed western idea designed to increase the gap between elite and non-elite institutions even more. In reality, EQM is a continual improvement process, a mark of quality, and peer acknowledgment of academics’ efforts (Mishra, 2007).
- \* **National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC):** The NAAC provides financial assistance to institutions to

organise various state and national seminars, workshops on the related topics and provide platforms for the individuals indulged in the education systems to debate and discuss the improvement of quality in higher education systems. Higher Education Institutions are evaluated and accredited by looking at and evaluating the different aspects that contribute to the quality standards stated below (Pabrekar et al., 2015):

S.No.	Criteria	University	Autonomous College	Affiliated/ Constituent College
I.	Curricular Aspects	150	150	100
II.	Teaching-Learning and Evaluation	200	300	350
III.	Research, Consultancy and Extension	250	150	150
IV.	Infrastructure and Learning Resources	100	100	100
V.	Students Support and Progression	100	100	100
VI.	Governance, Leadership and Management	100	100	100
VII.	Innovative and Best practice	100	100	100
	TOTAL SCORE	1000	1000	1000

Table 1: The table depicts the parameters for quality measures by NAAC

Within this broad framework, NAAC's decision-making process for the accreditation exercise's conclusion includes the following steps ( Pabrekar et al., 2015):

?Step I: Key Aspect-wise Grade (KAG) and Grade Points (KAGP)

?Step II: Criterion-wise Grade Point Average (CrGPA) and Criterion Grade

?Step III: Institutional Grade and Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA)

## Conclusion

We know the importance of higher education in terms of quality. This directly impacts all facets of a country's growth and allows the country to stand high on the global stage. Throughout India in terms of quantity, higher education has grown a lot over the span of years. The involvement of teachers to make education valuable and desirable would definitely lead to the holistic development of the country's education system. There are various ways that have been discussed in the paper that would ensure quality teaching among the students. Quality cannot be measured but can be seen through self-assessment and students' knowledge. It is very important for teachers to check up on the measures to ensure quality teaching for the country's overall development.

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## ***Requesting, Suggesting, Questioning, and Refusing: How Likely?***

### **An Analysis of English Textbooks for Development of Pragmatic Competence Among Young ESL Learners**

***Dr. Manali Karmakar\****

***Prof. Revathi Srinivas\*\****

#### ***Abstract***

This study examined samples of conversations in the English textbooks prescribed for study for students in Classes I-V to ascertain whether these samples facilitate the development of pragmatic competence with reference to speech acts of *questioning, requesting, suggesting, and refusal*. Adopting Searle's (1976) speech act theory and politeness taxonomies proposed by House and Kasper (1981) and Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), the study analyzed conversations to determine the frequency distribution of the various speech acts in the five textbooks. The extent to which the linguistic strategies presented in the coursebooks promote the norms of politeness with reference to the speech acts of *questioning, requesting, suggesting, and refusal* were also ascertained. The findings of the study revealed that the linguistic inputs presented for enhancing pragmatic competence of the learners were not adequate. The speech acts of *questioning, requesting, suggesting, and refusal* were not intertwined with metalinguistic and metapragmatic rules that are conceived to be an integral factor for facilitating learners' development of pragmatic competence in the target language.

**Keywords:** pragmatic competence, speech acts, politeness strategies, coursebooks, young learners.

#### **1. Introduction**

Second language pragmatics (L2 pragmatics) as a discipline was incepted in the early 1980s. The linguistic field gained momentum

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\* Vellore Institute of Technology, Chennai, India

\*\* The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, India

in the 1990s with a research trend guided by the paradigm of interlanguage pragmatics that primarily focuses on the study of the acquisition of pragmatic competence by second language learners (L2 learners) in a cross-cultural setting (Kasper and Dahl, 1991). Jenny Thomas (1983) in her article titled “Cross-Cultural Pragmatic Failure” defines pragmatic competence as the ability to appropriately participate and decipher the speaker’s intended meaning. Thomas states that the knowledge of pragmatic competence evolves as a result of the judicious interface between grammatical, psycholinguistic, and social competence (92). It may be explained as a complex metacognitive and cognitive processing of interpretation and execution of illocutionary acts in a goal-oriented linguistic situation. Thus, acquisition of pragmatic competence in the context of the second language emerges as a challenging task as it takes into consideration the linguistic and the non-linguistic means for realizing communicative acts in a cross-cultural setting.

Margo (2007) discusses speech acts as the key component of pragmatic competence “because they represent key moments of linguistic and non-verbal expressions where the speaker’s intention must be communicated properly within a cultural context” (30). Yule (1996) defines speech act as the action performed via utterances (47). Taguchi and Roever (2017) emphasize on the explicit teaching of L2 pragmatics in order to minimize learners’ inclination to transfer pragmatic schema from L1 to the target language. However, Taguchi and Roever (2017) state that although “pragmatics is teachable in principle, little structured teaching of pragmatics occurs in most courses. Pragmatics rarely forms an explicit part of the curricula. This may be due to teachers, curriculum writers, and material designers’ unfamiliarity with pragmatics” (“The Significant interest,” para. 2). In order to bridge the limitation of the language teaching pedagogy, researchers argue that focus should be on incorporating appropriate forms of pragmatic inputs in a coursebook that is conceived to be the heart of language teaching programme (Sheldon 1988; Ekin 2013; Jiang 2005; Vellenga 2004; Richard 2006).

Diepenbrok and Derwing (2013) argue that although over-reliance on textbooks may absolve teachers from being creative and

autonomous, coursebooks are considered as tangible learning resources that may be used to know about the standardized teaching methodologies required to introduce new pragmatic components. Textbooks serve as a roadmap for teaching. Well-designed textbooks may offer ample information to learners about the appropriate usage of speech acts that are conceived to be an integral component of pragmatic knowledge. Diepenbrok and Derwing further assert, “Textbooks not only provide English to second/foreign (ESL/EFL) learners with grammatical and lexical aspects of the L2, but they also present pragmatic content that is necessary for the successful L2 learning”. (Cited in Meihami and Khanlarzadeh, 2015:1). Hence the present study aimed at investigating the extent to which the textbooks prescribed for young learners of government schools in Telangana state, India, offered opportunities to develop their pragmatic competence. Adopting Searle’s (1976) speech act theory, the study analyzed the distribution of the frequency of speech acts and also examined the presentation of linguistic strategies that intend to familiarize the young learners with the norms of politeness. Referring to the taxonomies of politeness proposed by House and Kasper (1981) and Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984), Martinez-Flor (2005), and Jiang (2013), the study examined the linguistic inputs related to the speech acts of *requesting* and *suggestion*. Borge’s discussion of the questioning types and the refusal taxonomy proposed by Ren (2010) and Beebe et. al (1990) were also used to examine the presentation of linguistic inputs related to *questioning* and *refusal*. Accordingly, the following research questions were formulated.

- i. How are the speech acts distributed and what is their frequency of occurrence in the five textbooks?
- ii. Which linguistic strategies (with reference to the selected speech acts of *questioning*, *requesting*, *suggestion*, and *refusal*) have been included in the instructional materials to develop the pragmatic competence of the young learners and how frequently do they occur?

## 2. Literature Review

In recent years many studies have been conducted to investigate

the inclusion of speech acts and their frequency of distribution in coursebooks. Most of them suggest that speech acts such as *requesting*, *suggestion*, and *complaint* have received adequate attention in the textbooks. In addition to this, existing research narratives have foregrounded the fact that linguistic inputs related to speech act mitigating strategies found limited attention in the textbooks (Jiang, 2005, Flora, 2003). Aspects of sociopragmatic competency like direct and indirect conversational strategies, the degree of politeness, and the variation in semantic formulae based on the relationship of interlocutors have not received systematic attention in the coursebooks (Vellenga 2004, Nguyen 2011). The following section presents, in brief, the theoretical framework of pragmatic competence required for mitigating conversation based on contextual variabilities.

### 2.1 Face-Threatening Act and Politeness Theory

Al-Duleimi et. al. (2016) mention politeness as an acquired skill that an individual learns gradually by deciphering the norms encoded in the socio-cultural context in which the interaction is performed. Although politeness is conceived to be a universal phenomenon, the functions and its realization vary depending on the contexts in which it is performed. Politeness is an integral component of communication and the appropriate usage of polite linguistic structures enables us to create a sustainable relationship in our professional and personal spheres. Awareness of politeness norms enables us to make conscious choice of linguistic structures to display respect and to acknowledge the hearer's participation in the conversation. People use polite linguistic structures to various degrees to minimize the force of their speech acts (Al-Duleimi et.al. 2016: 262). Brown and Levinson (1987) define politeness as the implementation of mitigating strategies for avoiding face-threatening acts. They derive the notion of the face from "that of Goffman (1967) and the English folk term, which ties face up with notions of being embarrassed or humiliated, or 'losing face'" (311). They argue that the notion of face is emotionally invested and during a conversation, interlocutors are tied in a loop to maintain, enhance, and safeguard their self-image to achieve communication goals. There are two components of the face, i.e., negative and positive. A negative face signifies "the want of every 'competent adult member' that his

actions be unimpeded by others", in contrast to this, a positive face signifies "the want of every member that his wants be desirable to at least some others" (312).

Directly expressed speech acts such as *requesting*, *ordering*, *criticizing*, *forbidding*, *suggesting*, *questioning*, and *refusal* may generate imposition on an addressee, thereby compromising on his/her freedom of choice to complete the task. Directly expressed speech acts such as *Clean up the kitchen; I really wish you'd clean up the kitchen* are face-threatening and are speaker-oriented because they emphasize the speaker's intention. In contrast to this, indirect speech acts such as *Would you lend me your pen?* are hearer-oriented because the speaker uses interrogative sentence structure to make the request less imposing. Hence, the linguistic strategy serves as an apt tool to moderate the illocutionary force. Yule (1996) defines direct and indirect speech acts thus: "Whenever there is a direct relationship between a structure and a function we have a direct speech act. Whereas, whenever there is an indirect relationship between a structure and a function, we have indirect speech acts" (54-55). Usage of indirect speech acts demonstrates a higher level of language proficiency (Kasper and Schmidt, 1996). It may be further stated that an indirect speech act is one in which the illocutionary force of the speaker's utterance does not correspond to a one-to-one fashion with the illocutionary act. When a speaker uses an interrogative sentence like *Can you pass the water bottle?* for making a request, it stands as an example of an indirect speech act. House and Kasper (1981) explicate a range of linguistic devices such as *politeness markers*, *play-downs*, *consultative devices*, *hedges*, *understraters*, *downtoners*, *committers*, *forewarning*, *hesitators*, *scope-staters*, and *agent-avoiders* to discuss the politeness strategies used to modify speech acts.

Watts (2003) states that House and Kasper's (1981) politeness linguistic expressions have been adopted and adapted by many researchers for analyzing speech acts in language learning contexts. For instance, Edmondson (1977) introduces politeness markers like *cajolers* and *appealers* under the category of *gambit* to indicate the

strategies that may be used to downgrade the impact of the speech act of *requesting*. Like *requesting*, the speech acts of *refusal*, *suggestion*, and *questioning* are conceived as face-threatening acts (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Linguistic strategies related to the speech act of *refusal* are broadly divided into three categories. These are direct, indirect, and adjuncts of refusals (Beebe et.al., 1990: 60-70). Direct strategies as explained above are indicated by phrases such as *I can't; I refuse*, etc. that demonstrate a cohesion between the statement used and the illocutionary force generated to perform the speech acts. Indirect strategies are performed by linguistic structures such as *I'm sorry...; I feel terrible...; One can't be too careful...* etc., that demonstrate a mismatch between the speech act used and the illocutionary force generated by the speaker. Adjuncts to refusal are demonstrated through sentences that indicate a statement of positive opinion, statement of empathy, pause fillers, and gratitude. Speech act strategies related to *suggestion* are also broadly divided into three categories i.e. direct, conventionalized forms, and indirect (Martinez-Flor 2005:175).

Borge (2013) insists that the speech act of *questioning* be analyzed from the perspective of politeness theory because, in many contexts, the speech act of *questioning* demonstrates the speaker's ignorance and hence might be face-threatening. Similarly, it might be threatening for the hearer as well who might be compelled to respond to the speaker's queries. Thus, the speech act of *questioning* has to be mitigated through a range of linguistic expressions and semantic formulae to abide by the norms of politeness. Borge further states that the speech act of *questioning* is not merely used to elicit information and presents a series of question types such as information questions, tag questions (agreement and confirmation), polar question/yes-no questions, rhetorical questions, repair questions, alternative and unwarranted questions that are used to perform a range of linguistic functions.

The review of the existing literature foregrounds the integral relationship between speech acts and mitigating strategies for acquiring pragmatic competence. Thus, researchers such as Ren and

Hans (2016), Vu (2017), and Sahragard and Jevanmardi (2011) advocate that mere analysis of frequency distribution of the speech acts is insufficient and that the presentation of politeness strategies in the coursebooks should also be an integral component of the analysis. With the review of literature in the area discussed so far, the study investigated the frequency distribution of speech acts with a special focus on the presentation of the polite linguistic expressions in the selected textbooks. The study was conducted in the context of Telangana State in south India where English is taught as a second language (and a compulsory subject) from Class I in government schools. English is the medium of instruction across subjects for all classes. Children who are enrolled in government schools are admitted to Class I at the age of five.

The next section presents details of materials analyzed and the statistical tools used to analyze the data.

### 3. Materials

The government of Telangana distributes textbooks free of cost to all students enrolled in the government run schools. For this study speech acts in the five textbooks (Classes I-V), produced by the Government of Telangana, Department of School Education, were analyzed. According to the State Council of Educational Research and Training, textbooks titled MY ENGLISH WORLD are prepared on a 'holistic approach of language learning. The language skills namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing are integrated into the larger context of the themes suggested in the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005. The activities are designed as per children's knowledge and experiences which ensure their active participation in the teaching-learning process. The main aim of teaching English is to help learners evolve themselves as independent users of English' (Preface, iii). MY ENGLISH WORLD, Class I has seven units while those of Classes II, III, IV, and V consist of eight units each.

### 4. Methodology

The study followed/adopted the principles of content analysis, "a methodology which can be used quantitatively and qualitatively for systematic analysing of written, verbal, or visual documentation"

(Wilson 2011:177). As a scientific study, content analysis utilizes a set of procedures to make valid inferences from the text. Accordingly, the pragmatic components that were presented in the form of dialogues in the reading passages were identified and entered in a google spread, to identify the speech acts as discussed by Searle's (1976) speech act categories. A total of one hundred and thirty-five samples of speech acts were identified in the five textbooks. Texts for listening comprehension, which are part of the reading text itself, were not included in the analysis. Secondly, the quantitative analysis of the frequency, distribution, and strategies presented in the coursebooks were displayed in a tabular format in order to foreground the four speech acts that had received highest attention in the coursebooks of Classes I-V. Findings of the analysis indicate that speech acts of *questioning*, *requesting*, *suggestion*, and *refusal* had received highest attention in the textbooks.

After identifying the speech acts that occur frequently in the five textbooks, the researchers examined the linguistic forms of these four speech acts of *questioning*, *requesting*, *suggesting*, and *refusal* to ascertain the extent to which the linguistic strategies presented in the coursebooks promote the norms of politeness with reference to the speech acts. The taxonomies adopted for analysing the four speech acts are represented in the table below:

Sl No.	Speech Act	Taxonomy
1	<i>Questioning</i>	Borge's (2013)
2	<i>Requesting</i>	House and Kasper (1981) and Blum-Kulka and Olshtain's (1984)
3	<i>Suggesting</i>	Martinez-Flor (2005) and Jiang's (2013)
4	<i>Refusal</i>	Ren (2010), and Beebe et. al. (1990)
5.	Results and Discussion	

The first part of this section presents results data obtained from the analysis of the frequency of distribution of speech acts and their sub-categories from textbooks prescribed for Classes I-V. Details of the frequency of distribution of speech acts across the five textbooks are presented in Table 1 below.

### Table 5.1: Frequency Distribution of Speech Acts

As the table indicates, directives as an illocutionary act occurred the most in all the textbooks. Contrary to this, illocutionary acts such as *expressives*, *commissives*, and *representatives* had received minimal attention. Under *directives*, sub-categories like *questioning*, *requesting*, and *suggesting* had received more focus in comparison to *instructing*, *reassuring*, and *warning*. The column on *directives* demonstrates that *questioning* speech act had received adequate attention in the coursebooks of Classes 1-5. In other words, of the speech acts analysed, *questioning* occurs with the highest frequency of 38.51%; *requesting* with 21.48%; and *suggesting* with 21.48%. It is interesting to note that the speech act of *suggesting* does not occur in all the coursebooks. It is included once in Class I, five times in the textbook for Class III, eleven times in the coursebook for Class IV, and once in the textbook for Class V. Similarly *refusing* as a speech act did not appear in all the coursebooks. Instances of its use are found in five samples in the textbooks prescribed for Class III, once in the textbook of Class IV, and four times in the coursebook for Class V.

Two important points emerge from the above analysis of the five textbooks. First, the distribution of speech act is not uniform across the textbooks. Second, young learners are exposed to the speech act of *questioning* more than any other speech act. The other speech acts are grossly neglected in their inclusion and treatment. Such a lopsided presentation might result in inadequate development of pragmatic competence amongst young learners. The findings of the study corroborate with the studies of Vellenga (2004), Nyugen (2011), and Diepenbroekand Derwing (2013) that had discussed the limitations of textbooks in developing the pragmatic competencies of the target group. The dialogue and conversations strategy used for presenting the pragmatic component in the coursebooks was criticized by scholars like Nguyen (2011) who argued that dialogues and conversations stagnate learners' knowledge because they do not correlate with real-life scenarios. This strategy lacks linguistic and contextual variabilities that are guided by the politeness norms. The conversation strategies introduced in the coursebooks of Classes 1-5, as is evident from the data, fail to a large extent in sensitizing the







young learners to and developing their pragmatic competencies.

The second part of the section discusses the representation of speech acts of *questioning*, *requesting*, *suggesting*, and *refusing* respectively as these were highly frequent in the textbooks. A tabular presentation of results is presented in Tables 2-5 to discuss the result obtained from examining the range of speech act strategies and their frequencies presented in the coursebooks for enhancing the metapragmatic and pragmatic knowledge of young learners. Data pertaining to the analysis of the speech act of *questioning* is presented in a tabular form below:

**Table 5.2: Distribution of Different Types of Questions and Questioning Strategies in the Coursebooks**

Class	Question Types							Strategies	
	Information/Wh	Tag Questions i. Agreement ii. Confirmation	Polar/Yes- No	Rhetorical	Repair	Alternative	Unwarranted	Direct	Indirect Question- Hedge
I	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	4	0
II	9	0	5	0	0	0	0	14	0
III	3	1	4	0	0	0	0	8	0
IV	10	0	1	0	0	0	0	11	0
V	10	0	4	1	0	0	0	15	0
Total No.	32	1	18	1	0	0	0	52	0
Total %	61.53%	1.92%	34.61%	1.92%	0	0	0	100%	0

An analysis of the sub-categories of the speech act of *questioning* in all the five books indicates that samples of information/Wh- question types and polar question types are found in abundance. Contrary to this, tag questions appeared only once in the textbooks of Classes III and IV. Similarly, rhetorical questions appeared once in the textbooks of Classes IV and V. Samples of sub-categories of *questioning* such as *repair*, *alternative*, and *unwarranted* questions were not included in the coursebooks. It was interesting to find that all the question types presented in the coursebooks followed direct strategies. None of the textbooks provided any explanations for sensitizing the young learners about the range of semantic formulae that can be used for asking questions using indirect strategies.

In this context, Borge (2013) argued that “questions are not only devices for eliciting information, they are also embedded in a complex social network of face concern that one must take into consideration

for asking a question” (417). Borge explained that while asking a question, the questioner imposes his will on the addressee. Thus asking a question may be a face-threatening act. In this context, the questioner can mitigate the imposition by asking the question indirectly or by using question-hedge strategies. However, in the majority of the textbooks of the linguistic inputs primarily focuses on information seeking questions like “*How shall we go to Hyderabad, Nana?*” (Class II: 28); “*Are those Cucumbers?*” (Class III: 43); “*What about me?*” (Class IV: 23) where students were not sensitized about the mitigating strategies required for asking a question drawing on politeness theories. The findings of the study indicated that young learners were deprived of exposure to a higher degree of linguistic complexities and pragmatic sophistication. For instance, samples of oversimplified structures such as “*Will you marry me?*” (Class 1: 116); “*Why are you laughing?*” (Class II: 49); “*Is that an apple?*” (Class II: 42) are found in abundance in the textbooks. Thus, it can be seen that the linguistic inputs presented for teaching the speech act of *questioning* strategies were not adequate to familiarize learners with the complexities and the range of speech act strategies required for asking a questioning based on contextual variables.

The following section discusses the linguistic strategies used to realize the speech act of *requesting* in the five textbooks. Findings of the study revealed that the primary focus was on speaker-oriented sentence structures such as “*Ammu, help me! That crow will kill me*” (Class I: 72); “*Please bring her down*” (Class II: 17); “*Please give me something to eat*” (Class III: 60); “*Sweet Pancake, don't roll so fast. Please stop for a while*” (Class IV: 22); “*Please listen to me*” (Class V: 98) that focus on the speaker's intention.

Table 5.3: Distribution of Requesting Strategies in the Course books

Class	Speaker Oriented	Addressee Oriented		Impersonal	Simple Politeness	Indirect/Politeness	
		Formal	Informal			Formal	Informal
I	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
II	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
III	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
IV	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
V	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total No.	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total %	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Table no. 3 presents data related to the presentation of the range of linguistic input for sensitizing learners about the *requesting* strategies. From the table it can be seen that the textbooks primarily focused on hearer-oriented sentence structures, for instance “*I will eat tell me a story, please*” where the speaker plays the role of an active agent and the addressee occupies the space of passive recipient (Class I: 114). It is surprising to find that 89.65% of the linguistic input presented in the coursebooks focused on hearer-oriented strategies. However, speaker-oriented sentence structures like “*Will you give me a ticket, please?*” had received minimal attention. Instances of speaker-oriented sentence structures were found twice in class I and once in Class V but none in the textbooks of Classes II, III, and IV. Simple politeness markers such as “Please” occur thrice in the textbook for students of Class I, six times in the one for Class II, twice in the coursebook for Class III, only once in that of Class IV, and seven times in the textbook for students in Class V. Although 27.5% of the linguistic input focused on external modification, this exposure is not adequate to teach learners about the range and complexities of the speech act strategies related to *request*.

The next section discusses the presentation of the politeness strategies of the speech act of *suggestion* in the textbooks of Classes I-V. Findings of the investigations revealed that the primary focus was on teaching *suggestions* through semantic formulae such as *Lets* and *Wh* questions. Sentence structures such as “*Let’s catch it*” (Class I: 39); “*Let’s clean up the room*” (Class III, pg. 30); “*Why don’t we peel one banana and keep it ready to eat?*” (Class IV: 28) are recurrently presented in the textbooks from Classes I-V.

**5.4: Speech Act of Suggestion**

*Suggestion* belongs to the group of directive speech acts and proposes the hearer to perform an action that the speaker considers to be effective (Searle 1979). According to Jiang (2005) speech act research has ascertained that performing the speech act of *suggestion* is a complex phenomenon, and in many contexts, ESL learners tend to use direct strategies for offering *advice* and *suggestions* even though usage of indirect strategies might be appropriate to the context. Jiang’s

study advocated that ESL learners have difficulty in formulating sociolinguistically appropriate structures to perform the speech act of *suggestions*. Learners’ usage of semantic formulae was often direct, less polite than native speakers, and was rude. Studies had identified that ESL learners’ inadequacy in using the speech acts appropriately is connected to the discrepancies between the actual linguistic realization of speech acts and the presentation of sentence structures in the textbook. The present study subscribes to McCarthy’s (1998) claim that “textbooks typically try to simplify real language use and reduce complexity to a list of phrase-level-option” (cited in Jiang 2005: 39). Performing a speech act is an interactive process that takes into consideration the nature of interaction and the relationship between the speakers. However, in the five textbooks, which were examined in this study, the degree of appropriacy of the linguistic structure was not explained. The table offers a figurative representation of the distribution of the speech act in the coursebooks of Classes I-V.

Table 5.5: Distribution of *Suggestion* in the Coursebooks

Class	Page No.	Types of Strategies									
		Direct					Indirect			Indirect	
		Imperatives	Politeness Strategies	Interrogatives	Regulative Interrogatives	Interrogative Imperatives	Possibility	Probability	Small	Need	Other
I	39	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
II	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
III	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
IV	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
V	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total No.	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total %	100.00	0	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0.00%	0	0	0	0

The result analysis of the above figures demonstrated that simple imperative and Wh- sentences like “*Let’s catch it*” (Class I: 39); “*Lets’ clean up the room*” (Class III: 30); “*Why don’t we peel the banana and keep it ready to eat*” (Class IV, p. 28) were recurrently presented in the coursebooks of Classes I, III, and IV in order to familiarize learners. A whopping 73.33% of linguistic input to teach *suggesting* as a speech act was by using direct strategies with a special emphasis on imperatives. Samples of interrogative forms were found twice in the textbook prescribed for Class IV and linguistic input related to possibility and probability was presented once in that of Class II. None of the textbooks presented indirect strategies which

are a crucial component to develop the pragmatic competency of the young learners, findings that corroborates with that of Ekin (2013) and Jiang (2006). Although semantic formulae like *Let's...* recurrently occur in the textbook, cryptodirective collaborative function of *Lets'* as a polite command is not found. Jiang strongly advocated that learners should be sensitized to the fact that *Let's* as a semantic formulae may be used by the speaker either to indicate joint action or an individual effort. Lexical hedges and modals such as *should*, *need to*, *have to* are also considered to be essential for teaching the speech act of *suggestions*. Jiang argued:

The three models function differently in terms of formality and also demonstrate different degrees of authority and urgency of the message. Not only *should*, *have to*, and *need to* be included in textbooks as structures for making suggestions but the explanations of their functional differences and socio-cultural preferences should also be presented. (49)

An analysis of the five textbooks indicates that these essential components for the appropriate usage of the speech act of *suggestion* were not included in the textbooks. The following section discusses the distribution linguistic structures of the speech act of *refusal* in the coursebooks of Classes I-V.

Table 5.6: Distribution of *Refusal* Strategies in Coursebooks

Class	Direct Refusal		Indirect/Polite	Adjunct to Refusal
	Direct No.	Negative Ability		
I	0	0	0	0
II	0	0	0	0
III	5	0	0	0
IV	1	0	0	0
V	1	0	0	0
Total/No.	7	0	0	0
Total%	100%	0%	0%	0%

The speech act of *refusal* is defined by Hoglin (2007) as the “utterance which is spoken out to perform the action to refuse” (67). Refusal “as a speech act by which a speaker denies to engage in an action proposed by an interlocutor” (Chen et al., 1995: 121 cited in Bella, 2010: 2). Sahragard and Javanmardi (2011) argue that the

speech act should be performed carefully because it threatens the listener's face (Brown and Levinson, 1978). Felix-Brasdefer (2006) stated that from a sociolinguistic perspective the speech act of *refusal* is important because on the one hand, it is a face-threatening act and on the other, it takes into consideration social variables like gender, age, level of education, power and social hierarchies. Since *refusal* is a face-threatening act, inappropriate usage of strategies might disrupt the personal or professional relationships of interlocutors. Hence, attention should be paid to presenting varied linguistic expressions to inform learners about its appropriate usage that is context and culturally sensitive. Data pertaining to the analysis of the polite linguistic structures of the speech act of *refusal* is presented in a tabular form below:

The column on direct refusal indicates that 90% of the linguistic input on *refusal* focuses on the direct articulation of the inability with sentence structures like “*Not I*”; “*No, you will not*” (Class III: 58-60). Samples of indirect and adjunct refusal strategies such as “*I'm sorry...*”; “*I feel terrible*”; “*I wish I could help you*”, “*That's a good idea*”; “*I'd love to*” are not found in the coursebooks (Beebe et.al., 1990: 60-70).

## 6. Conclusion

The analysis of the five textbooks for the distribution of speech acts, their frequencies, and the strategies used for developing the speech acts of *questioning*, *requesting*, *suggesting*, and *refusal* reveals that the instructional materials neither represented a fair share of the distribution of the speech acts nor do did they provide samples of politeness strategies to develop the pragmatic competencies of learners in relation to select the speech acts taken up for the study. The linguistic inputs presented for teaching speech acts of *questioning*, *requesting*, *suggesting*, and *refusal* were not entwined with metalinguistic and metapragmatic information that is conceived to be an integral factor for facilitating learners' development of pragmatic competence in the target language. The findings of the study validate with the findings of Nguyen (2011) who avers that “textbooks do not always constitute as an accurate and adequate

source for pragmatic information” (22). Revising instructional materials which have been examined in this study by including samples of polite linguistic structures for the realization of the select speech acts will ensure that the lacunae can be overcome to a large extent. This is the need of the hour as a majority of young learners rely largely on these textbooks for language acquisition and development.

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## 11

## Theme of Endurance in Ernest Hemingway's The Old Man and The Sea

Dr. Geeta Goyal\*

### Abstract

Ernest Hemingway, a distinguished American novelist and the Nobel Prize winner, brings out the extraordinary quality of an ordinary man in his short novel *The Old Man and the Sea*. Published in 1952, it depicts the story of an old fisherman's long and lonely struggle with a giant fish and the vast sea. Santiago, often called 'Salao' by other fishermen, is an individual who dreams big and sets an example of utmost commitment in his struggle with the powerful forces of Nature. Despair, conflict and doubts entrap him, but he still goes on unflinchingly. The paper analyses the extraordinary dignity and heroism of Santiago, his tribulation and struggle and power of endurance which makes him strong enough not to surrender but resist defeat with courage and dignity.

*The Old Man and the Sea* received the Pulitzer Prize in 1953 and the Nobel in 1954. Hemingway said that he had probably read it two hundred times before getting it published. The protagonist of the novel is a Cuban fisherman. Through him the author depicts the power of an ordinary man - what he can do and how much he is capable of. Despite being a poor, unfortunate fisherman, who has been unsuccessful in catching a fish for the last 84 days, Santiago dreams big and strives hard to fulfil it with all his strength and sincerity. He exhibits the heroic impulse in man and depends only upon himself to face innumerable challenges truly and honestly. This quality makes him stand different from others and makes him fulfil Hemingway's concept of code hero. He is a man who lives only by 'hope', hope of getting a big fish. As he says, "It is silly not to hope. Besides, I believe it is a sin."<sup>1</sup> It's his hope only which makes him embark on a strenuous journey all alone and makes him struggle against the

immeasurable forces of nature. The same hope persists in the last line of the novel when he dreams about the African lions. His aspiration to catch a big marlin, his dauntless courage in fights with sharks and finally the skeleton of the fish he brings back - make the reader think what Hemingway intends to project through this 'strange' old man.

The opening of the novel describes him as "an old man who fished alone in a skiff in the Gulf stream and he had gone eighty-four days now without taking a fish" (5). Besides he is too old and couldn't be a real fisherman, "...thin gaunt with deep wrinkles in the back of his neck" (5). Often called 'Salao', which is the worst form of unlucky, Santiago sails in the Gulf stream all alone with limited means - a mast, wooden bore with the coiled, hard-braided brown lines, the gaff and harpoon and a broken skiff whose sail when furled "looked like the flag of permanent defeat" (5). In the third passage of the opening of the novel, the author says, "Everything about him was old except his eyes and they were the same colour as the sea and were cheerful and undefeated" (6). This reflects his defiant spirit and strong will power. The later part of the novel depicts him a man who possesses tremendous courage and carries the sparks to do miracles.

Though broken physically, he has the strength and confidence needed to catch a big fish. He says to Manolin, "I may not be as strong as I think, but I know many tricks and I have resolution" (18).

Knowing that he was going far out, he rowed out into the ocean all alone. His dream comes true when a great fish comes in his line almost two feet longer than his skiff, 'Bright in the sun' with head and back 'dark purple' (54). Santiago is put into struggle against the vast force of nature which he rarely comprehends but he is strong enough to know that once in, he should continue to strive and not leave in-between though he knows that the struggle would end in defeat. He has to pass difficult days and sleepless nights in his struggle against the big fish. All alone, sometimes he feels desperate and helpless. Circumstances are against him and his hand is cramped. He feels an unbelievable pain but still ruminates, "But I have had worst things than that" (65). He gets exhausted but gains strength by

\* Associate Professor of English, RKSD (PG) College, Kaithal, Haryana

thinking that “pain doesn’t matter to a man” (75). At times he feels desperate and is reminded of the boy Manolin. He cries, “I wish I had the boy” (40) thinking that “no one should be alone in their old age,” but then thinks that it is unavoidable. He again and again becomes firm in his resolve and soothes himself “Be calm and strong, old man” and “Keep your head clear and know how to suffer like a man or a fish...” (82).

The novel presents an account of how Santiago fights dauntlessly and succeeds in killing most of the sharks attacking his fish. His harpoon is lost, knife is snapped and tiller is broken. Though he undergoes unbearable pain yet it is transcended with time and he tries to pursue his endeavor, to pursue the giant marlin. “That which I was born for.” When the fish had been hit it was as though “he himself were hit”(92). At times, he regrets, “I am sorry that I went too far out, I ruined us both” (104), but these are only momentary thoughts and he resolves to stand up again against all odds and fight until death. He thinks of DiMaggio, the greatest baseball player of his times, and gathers strength by thinking that he too might have endured so much pain.

In the later part of the novel, when the fish has been ripped away by sharks and there is nothing more for them to eat, his condition becomes pathetic. He cries loudly and desperately, “from his pain he knew he was not dead” (106). He tries to lift up the mast and starts climbing, but it is too difficult and he has to sit down five times before he reaches his shack. Under the weight of the mast, he staggers his hut weeping and groaning with the marlin lashed to the skiff. He lies exhausted in his bed, his hands terribly wounded. The boy sees him breathing and on seeing his hands, starts crying. He admits, “I am not lucky. I am not lucky anymore” (112). But the boy is not ready to accept it and says, “The hell with luck, I’ll bring the luck with me” (113). He talks about fishing together again. The next morning, the other fishermen are surprised and wondered to see at the size of the skeleton and measure it to see by how much it is record breaking. Towards the end Hemingway says “Up the road, in his shack, the old man was sleeping again. He was still sleeping on

his face and the boy was sitting by him watching him. The old man was dreaming about the lions” (114). It shows that Santiago continued hoping, still dreaming for another expedition, another venture – that everything was not over- that hope and dreams were still present - that make a man alive. To quote, “In going out too far and alone, Santiago has found his greatest strength and courage and dignity and nobility and love...”<sup>2</sup> Is Santiago defeated? Of course, in the end he gains nothing. Whatever he catches is eaten away by sharks and the skeleton of the marlin he brings back has no market value, but there is something in him which makes him attain dignity. Morally he proves to be an ideal fighter, a ‘code hero,’ who never surrenders and resists defeat with courage and endurance. He fights and kills the great marlin “out of pride,” out of desire to show that he is like the great fish. “You didn’t kill the fish only to keep alive and to sell for food, he thought. You killed him for the pride and because you are fisherman” (94-95). Thus, the novel presents a man who is not only capable of making the ultimate effort, but makes it successfully and convincingly. He sets out to prove that mere destruction is not defeat; that man is a permanent fighter, “not made for defeat” (93). To quote, “Santiago is, in fact, Hemingway’s code hero well versed in courage and hence eligible to be released from the trap of victimization and to achieve the dignity of a victor.”<sup>3</sup> All the qualities which Santiago sees in a great fish- courage, calmness and endurance- are the qualities which he values most and he himself wishes to confirm.

At the end his dreaming of African lions playing on the beaches he has seen in his younger days symbolizes new hope, new adventure. Similarly, reference to his defeating a huge Negro from Cienfuegos at the hand game and becoming a champion too suggests his skill and energy. Like a hero he dares more than other men and puts himself to greater dangers and risks the possibilities of defeat and death. As has rightly been observed, “*The old Man and the Sea* is a story of magnificent failure. It is a story of splendid success too.”<sup>4</sup> Philip Young opines, “Santiago is a fighter whose best days are behind him, who is too old for what his profession demands of him and, worse, is wholly down on his luck. But he still dares and sticks to the rules,

and not quit when he licked. He is undefeated, he endured, and his loss, therefore, in the manner of it, is itself a victory.”<sup>25</sup> Thus, he is heroic even in his bad luck. Santiago, though an ordinary man, is capable of extraordinary heroism by which he wins a moral triumph in the midst of a heart-breaking defeat. Despair, conflict and doubts entrap him, but he goes on unflinchingly. The story shows that it is not the victory or the defeat that matters, it is the struggle and the power of resilience and endurance that makes a man ‘undefeated’. For him ‘every day is a new day’ and what really matters is constant and untiring effort. The intensity of struggle, the sincerity of effort and the degree of courage Santiago exhibits raises him in the eyes of readers.

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## Rural India in Kamla Markandaya’s Fiction : A Study of Nectar in a Sieve and Two Virgins

Dr. Geetika Sandhu\*

Kamla Markandaya (1924-2004) is one of the famous Indian Novelists. She has held a mirror upto Indian Life and has explored various facets of Indian society. She has very clearly depicted the image of India, its socio-cultural reality, changes in social hierarchy resulting from Independence, Indian rural life, predicament of Indian woman and the matrix of relationship in Indian society. Her first novel **Nectar in a Sieve** is a genuine novel of rural India delineating the miserable plight of landless farmers.

The present novel presents the life of simple rural people of a south Indian village. The Village people are worried about the minimum basic needs and are engaged in different cultural activities. The novel depicts the story of a simple peasant couple Rukmani and Nathan from South India. The novel brings out the impact of industrialization on rural life. N. K. Jain feels that the novel presents, “an authentic picture of village life in transition, particularly of village poverty and hunger” (74) The subtitle of the novel, “A Novel of Rural India”, stresses, its rural setting and character.

Most of the characters in the novel are typically rural. Rukmini, Nathan, Janaki, Kali, Kunthi, Ira and many more nameless characters have an un-mistakable rural bearing. Their ways of life, attitudes, manners and speech belong to the countryside Hari Mohan Prasad calls Nathan and his wife “symbols of teeming millions, archetypal figures like Adam and eve” (99) “Rukmini was the youngest of the four daughters of a once prosperous village headman. Her first sister Shantha was married in the hey day of the father’s prosperity. So it was a big wedding lasting for many days, plenty of gifts and feasts, diamond earring, a gold necklace, as befitted, the daughter of the village headman” (NIS). Padmini next, and she too made a good

\* Assistant Professor in English, Directorate of Distance Education, Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra geetikasandhu21@gmail.com

match and was married fittingly taking jewels and dowry with her, but when it came to Thangam, the decline of her father's fortune had already been long underway, Rukmini's father's prestige diminished so much that she was married to a tenant farmer who was poor in everything but in love and care for her.

After her marriage to Nathan, Rukmini's new friends Kali and Janaki, teach her how to milk the goat, how to plant seed, how to churn butter from milk and how to mull rice. Very soon she gets habituated to a life of hardship and suffering but she bears everything with a smiling face, without tears in her eyes. Rukmini's husband Nathan is full of appreciation for whatever little success Rukmini has achieved. As a landless farmer, Nathan tilled the land worked on it, sweated and bled for it even though it belonged to others. The best harvest gave him the least reward and the least harvest drove him and his family to starvation.

The social life of the rural people is also quite circumscribed. Tied to its traditions and customs and handicapped in the absence of a fast transport, they cannot look far beyond their caste, village or social system. In the village, much more in the city, a childless woman – even one with daughter but without a son – is considered an ill fated one. At one time Rukmini's marital happiness was threatened because of her inability to produce a male child, even though she had a female one. Her daughter Ira's marriage is broken up because of her temporary barrenness. Husbands in the rural area had a social sanction to discard their barren or son-less wives. S.Z.H. Abidi remarks, "social realism employed by Kamla Markandaya in this novel is very close to the observed conditions of life" (28).

Kamla Markandaya clearly disapproves of superstitious practices of the rural people e.g. On the failure of rains Rukmini throws herself on the ground, prays, offers a pumpkin and a few grains of rice to the goodness, but no rains come. Superstitions and beliefs are a result of illiteracy. The villagers have many blind beliefs. It is also believed that cobras are sacred and hence they should not be killed. The rural people take pride in having more children. Considering it not only a concrete testimony of divine blessings but also a fortune in that there will be more hands to work on the farm. e.g. when

Rukmini fails to conceive after era, her mother takes her to temple and they pray before the deity for a son. After some time her first male child Arjun is born. Arjun is followed by many male children Thambi, Murugan, Raja, Selvam and Kutti.

Another important aspect that deals with the rural life is its pride in ancestral property. Rukmini like a typical villager takes pride in the hut built by her husband. She cries out when she is forced to leave her humble hut for town:

This home my husband had built for me with his own hands in the time he was waiting for me; brought me to it with a pride which I, used to better living, had so very nearly crushed. In it we had lain together and our children had been born. This hut with all its memories was to be taken from us, for it stood on the land that belongs to another. And the land itself by which we lived. (NIS 37)

Though Markandaya has depicted well the changing face of the village she has not ignored those traits of the rural people which have remained unchanged for centuries and continue to characterize them even now. These traits are simplicity, honesty, perseverance, selflessness spirit of co-operation, faith in God and man, and absence, of jealousy and temptation. Nathan and Rukmini lead a very simple life concerned mainly with food, clothes and shelter. Nathan's gradual impoverishment reminds one of Hari Ram, an illiterate tenant farmer in Prem Chand's **Godan**. Hari Ram Mahto is a symbol of simplicity and usefulness. In the pattern of typical Indian peasant, he too is fatalist believing in age-old customs and superstitions. Hari Ram, a man of older, traditional morality fails to comprehend the changing circumstances. Nathan too in **Nectar in a Sieve** is a traditional farmer who desires his sons to work on the fields but that does not interest him. Nathan's aspirations are shunned and sheltered and like Hari Ram and Dhania in Prem Chand's **Godan**, Rukmini and Nathan in **Nectar in a Sieve** are not defeated in their crusade against the changing socio-economic force. They seem to be embodiments of the ignorance, endurance, and the unflinching devotion to their age old traditions to which they are tied with inextricable bondage and they live for it and die for it.

In **Two Virgins** Kamla Markandaya depicts the traditional village life in contrast with city life. In this novel she focuses the search light on the change in the rural life brought about by the modern money based civilization in the country after independence. The changes are marked through the perceiving eyes of Saroja, the village girl as she sees them in her village and of her sister, Lalitha of the city. The village is situated in the South of Ganges and North of the Cauvery. Appa and Amma are typical South Indian names for parents. In this novel Markandaya presents a graphic picture of the beautiful nature scene in the village. The plantation on the roadside serves multiple purpose. The travellers take rest in the shade of Banyan trees. Saroja along with the boys enjoys swinging in the branches of trees. Amma is fond of tamarind as it yields "enormous quantities of tamarind for her pickles and for sale (TV 16). The biggest threat to rural vegetation comes from the monkeys. They come when the trees are loaded with fruits and the villages struggle hard to save their fruits from the monkeys.

Kamla Markandaya also describes with understanding the operations of village life, like sowing and harvesting, tending of cows and buffaloes, the activities of village sweet seller, black smith, the sikh hawker and soon. The novel revolves around the family of Appa, a freedom fighter, who has been appointed as a family planning advisors and is given an acre of land. Appa, Amma, their children and a dependant widow Aunt Alamelu constitute a lower middle class family in a South Indian Village. Among the working class people in the village are Manikam, the humble cultivator and the milkman. Chingleput, the sweet seller, Kannan, the unskilled carpenter and the blacksmith. These lowly plead ones lead an humble life. The novel depicts the miserable conditions of Indian villages. Saroja feels exasperated when she observes the village women collecting their daily need of water with much hardship. They have to go to the communal well and draw water by the pulley. The farmer's wives use the well, but the landowners who live in big houses have their own piped water.

In **Two Virgins** the novelist also depicts the travails that accompany transition from a rural agrarian life style to an urban, industrial way of life. The ageless rural civilization has been immensely affected by the insurgence of mechanization. There is a noticeable apprehension among the village workers. The blacksmith, the weavers, even chingleput have the fear of machines usurping them. When the factors affects agriculture and cottage industries, people tend to migrate to the town in search of employment. Chingleput, the sweet maker and the weavers apprehend sharp decline in sales of hand made thing. But the blacksmith is still unrelenting "no machine, he said, could be fashioned to do what he did, he was not afraid of machines usurping him which was the great fear of the weavers in the village" (TV 79). The young and subtle mind of saroja is so much disturbed by the change that she secretly but sincerely prays God "not to allow machines into their village which would destroy chingleput and his skills."

In this novel Kamala Markandaya also depicts the clash of values between traditional village life and modern city life. If Lalitha stands for extreme modernity, Aunt Alamelu stands for extreme conservation. Lalitha gets disgusted with her aunt who imposes restrictions on her movements. She is aggrieved by the unfair attitude of sexual discrimination. Lalitha feels dejected at their poor stature. She cries, "it is barbaric not having a fridge" (TV 80). She is convinced that fridge is not a luxury with the city people and the rich men posses but it is a necessity in a tropical country." Though Lalitha is born and brought up in the conservative society of the village she does not want to bring any rural touch in her and she does not submit to her mother's discipline and answers back when she is rebuked. But saroja on the other hand finds hersel suffocated in the mazes of the city when she goes to the city with her parents to talk about lalitha's pregnancy. She hates the city and yarns for her village. She is so much upset and bewildered that she wants to run away to her village and never come back to the city.

In the end we can say that the novelist's perception of Indian village is in terms of a nostalgia for the rural outlook that valued

human and humane considerations as basic to a healthy community. She presents Indian rural society with all its predilections, belief in ancient customs, and disruption of life caused by nature and industrialization. Her observation of Indian village are informed by an awareness of an emerging social order governed by machines, factories, trade and business.

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**Dr. R B Singh**



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