

Vol. 16.2

December 2016

ISSN 0974-7370

**INDIAN JOURNAL OF
POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURES**

(An International Refereed Biannual Published in June and December)

CENTRE FOR ENGLISH STUDIES AND RESEARCH

NEWMAN COLLEGE

THODUPUZHA - 685 585

KERALA, INDIA



CONTENTS

- Dazzled by a Star in the Dark: G. M. Hopkins' Agony in the Garden
- **Dasappan V. Y. & Claramma Jose** 5
- Ogres, Ogresses and Outcastes: The Conflicts of Subaltern Representation In The *Mahabharatha* and *Random Oozham*
- **Sreedevi K. Menon** 16
- Rohinton Mistry's *Family Matters*: A Postcolonial Reading
- **Neena Kishor** 29
- Voices of the Third World Feminine: A Riveting Journey through Nawal El- Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*
- **Kavitha N** 39
- Reconstructing Female Sexuality: Isadora in Erica Jong's *Fear of Flying*
- **Deepthi V. G** 50
- Symbolic Expressions of the Modern Psyche in Asimov's *Foundation Series*
- **Lekshmi R. Nair & T. M. Jacob** 61
- Self-portrayal: A Thematic and Historic Analysis and its Relevance Today
- **Joice Sebastian** 73
- Persistence of Narratives: The Armenian Episode in William Dalrymple's *From the Holy Mountain: A Journey in the Shadow of Byzantium*
- **Suma Alexander** 86

Deconstructing Master Narratives: Gogu Shyamala's *Father may be an Elephant and Mother only a Small Basket; But...* as: A Marking Shift within the Genre of Dalit Writing.

- **Preethy Eapen** 95

Moans and Cries in the Hurst of Desertion and Indifference: Voice of a Tribal Author; A Self-reflective Examination of the Fourth World in Narayan's 'Ooralikkudi'.

- **Neena V. S.** 108

Topistics and Environmental Changes since Colonization in Oodgeroo Noonuccal's *The Dawn is at Hand*

- **Susan Alexander** 120

Traces of Highbrowed Innuendo from the Epic: a kaleidoscopic Reading of Antedated Scientific Truths in the *Mahabharata*

- **Meera Prasannan** 133

Traversing the Amorphous: Enigmatic Self-Actualisation in Dharavi

- **Dawn Mariat Mathew** 143

Dr. Shivaram Karanth's *The Headman of the Little Hill*: A Representation of Tribal Life

- **N.H.Kallur** 157

Richard III : Disability in Shakespearean Body

- **J.S. Jahangir** 169

The Kid Lit Extravaganza: The Recent Trends in Children's Literature

- **Anusha Das** 178

Live(d) Tribal Oratures: A Case Study of Muduvan Community

- **Jerome K. Jose** 185

List of Contributors 194

Dazzled by a Star in the Dark: G. M. Hopkins' Agony in the Garden

Dasappan V. Y. & Claramma Jose

Gerard Manley Hopkins' consolation as a priest and poet was his experience of the indwelling of the divine in all creatures. In all his 'bright sonnets' one feels a deep sense of joy in God's presence throughout the natural world, and of triumph in the risen Christ in the redeemed world. In the brightness of the Resurrection, he gives "glory to God for dappled things" ('Pied Beauty'); he is happy to "lift up heart, eyes / down all that glory in the heavens to glean our Saviour" ('Hurrahing in Harvest') because 'he is under the world's splendour and wonder' ('The Wreck' 5). All creatures lead back to their creator, God. This is the sacramental view of nature and it is central to Hopkins' poetry. In fact this experience of consolation is beyond his words and therefore he struggles hard to express it:

. . . God rests in man as in a place, a locus, bed, vessel, expressly made to receive him as a jewel in a case hollowed to fit it, as the hand in the glove or the milk in the breast. . . . And God in *forma servi* rests in *servo*, that is, Christ as a solid in his member as a hollow or shell, both things being the image of God. . . This too best brings out the nature of the

man himself, as the lettering on a sail or device upon a flag are best seen when it fills (*Sermons* 195).

Hopkins, who experienced God present in creation, knew well the importance and significance of Ignatian consolation in human life. Therefore he says, “. . . consolation should be our normal state and that when God withdraws it he wishes us to strive to recover it” (*Sermons* 205).

If Hopkins’ character and verse are so firmly rooted in the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, if his fundamental and lasting experience as a priest and poet was one of divine consolation, one wonders how his poetry could be so tragically replete with intense sufferings and conflicts in the evening of his life. A staunch believer in God who was convinced that he had the divine call, a vocation, to be His minister, and who sang the praises of that God and Master in the major part of his life, is found fighting and quarrelling with his God towards the end of his life. How is it that Hopkins, who was privileged to grow up in a highly healthy environment at home, and thus was blessed with a happy childhood life, and who later on was equally privileged to associate with great scholars, poets, artists and spiritual leaders of the time, felt so weak in spirit and guilty about himself for his sins, just when he got the highest honour in his life as the Professor of Greek at University College, Dublin? These are some of the serious, pertinent questions one cannot overlook in a meaningful reading of Hopkins.

Hopkins’ sufferings and experiences of spiritual sterility can better be understood in the light of *The Spiritual Exercises*, particularly the Ignatian experience of desolation. According to

Ignatius the experiences of consolation and desolation are neither static nor stagnant. They are juxtaposed realities of life, spiral in character, and they are operative with equal force. They keep occurring all through human life.

The sonnets of the Dublin years are characterized as dark and even terrible, as the bright day of nature gives place to a terrible darkness of the soul, and his gregarious joy in the outside world is succeeded by a painful seclusion within the four walls of his little living room. They are still love poems, but a hopeless, unsatisfied love that turns to bitterness in the mouth. Hopkins' own words describe his long hours of desolation: "Dark heaven's baffling ban . . . O what black hours we have spent. Tumult in the soul: My cries heave, herds-long . . . self-disgust: 'selfyeast of spirit a dull dough sours, as it were separation from God, . . . Cries like dead letters" (*Ignatian Inspiration*, 898-99).

He feels angry with God for the injustice he experiences in life. While everything in Nature is allowed to bloom and flourish, he, who has given himself totally to the service of God, is denied of any success in life: ". . . birds build – but not I build" ("Thou Art Indeed Just O Lord"). As said in the Bible Hopkins became a eunuch for Christ (Matthew 19: 12), but God was unfair to him by draining him of all his artistic talents and making him suffer helplessly. Like Lear in Shakespeare's tragedy, Hopkins feels himself "more sinned against than sinning" (Act III, Sc. 2). In his utter dejection he feels that he has become impotent in every way and therefore he describes his pathetic situation: ". . . no, but strain, / Time's eunuch, and not breed one work that wakes." In his wrestle with God, Hopkins

feels defeated and thwarted by God and thinks that although God is his friend, He treats him much worse than his enemy would treat him: “Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend, / How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou dost / Defeat, thwart me?” (“Thou Art Indeed Just, O Lord”).

‘Spelt from Sibyl’s Leaves’, which according to Hopkins is the longest sonnet ever made, serves as both a direct introduction to the ‘dark sonnets’ as well as the beginning of Hopkins’ desolation, since it describes the fading of the dappled day time with evening deepening into night. Hopkins’ mood of gloom and hopelessness, which is explicitly expressed in his ‘terrible sonnets’, is already foreshadowed in this sonnet of 1885. As F. R. Leavis says, his heart ‘rounds’ him with the thought that the trees are no longer the beautiful, refreshing things of daylight; they have turned fantastically strange, hard and cruel (183-85). As darkness triumphs and grows progressively darker, in a sudden intuition, the Jesuit poet realizes that this blacking out of the world’s glory is inevitable and ineluctable. As in the case of the two conflicting groups in the Ignatian Exercise of Two Standards, so does the poet recognize the symbolic representation of time in two categories: black and white, right and wrong. He says: “Our evening is over us; our night whelms, whelms, and will end us. / . . . / selfwring, selfstrung, sheathe—and shelterless, thoughts / against thoughts in groans grind (‘Spelt from Sibyl’s Leaves’).

The emotional climate here reminds us of the agony of Christ before his supreme sacrifice. In effect the poet is suggesting to us: “My soul is sad even unto death. Wait here and watch” (Mk xiv.34)

and the poet cries out, “comforter where, where is your comforting”? (“No worst, there is none”). In ‘Carrion comfort’, Hopkins is fighting his own self-pity and is battling with an enemy who compels him to face his own inadequacy: and Christ, perfect in His selflessness, is trying to overpower the poet with a selfless motivation; the poet recognizes this; so he could say: “my chaff might fly, my grain lie, sheer and clear” (‘Carrion Comfort’). In his spiritual writing on grace, Hopkins says, “it is a purifying and mortifying grace, bringing the victim to the altar and sacrificing it” (Devlin. *Sermons* 158). As in the inner life of every Christian, especially a Christian priest who is striving for the closest possible union with Christ, there comes Gethsemane before Olivet; so there came the third week¹ to Hopkins. It came to him most overwhelmingly in Ireland. He makes no mention of the Passion; he does not write about the Agony in the Garden, but in a manner he lives it. As a priest-professor in Dublin, he feels overwhelmed by “dark heaven’s baffling ban”, and the absence of God, as Jesus felt in the garden and on the cross. His lament “is cries countless, cries like dead letters sent / To dearest him that lives alas: away” (‘I Wake and Feel the Fell of Dark, not Day’).

In this state of desolation he can only exhort himself to faith and patience. What he really needed was peace, but his prayer for peace had brought him only a fledgling substitute, patience. Patience was “a virtue that Hopkins needed often”, says Boyle (116). And in *The Spiritual Exercises*, Ignatius says: “Let him who is in desolation labour to be in patience, which is contrary to the vexations which come to him” (Loyola 321). Hopkins himself noted down this instruction in his spiritual writings (Devlin. *Sermons* 204) and wrote

a sonnet on 'Patience, hard thing'. It is in patience that he meets God, whose attribute is patience: "He is patient. Patience fills/ His crisp combs, and that comes those ways we know" ('Patience, hard thing'). As Pick rightly puts it, the purpose of desolation, according to St. Ignatius, is "to give in true acquaintance and knowledge, that all is the gift and grace of God our Lord and that we may not build a nest in a thing not ours" (Pick 134). Hopkins found this cross a love-sacrifice and the essence of Christian perfection, as the love of God unto the immolation of self.

Hopkins scholars, particularly MacKenzie, D'Arcy, Pick, Devlin and others who have delved deep into his terrible sonnets critically, assert that they do not resemble the utterances of the mystic who has passed through the dark night of the soul. Hopkins' cry in these sonnets is not the cry of a mystic. They are the most powerful expressions of his experience of "dry faith", as Pick would call it. It is the cry of every suffering person, his Ignatian desolation, nay his Gethsemane experience. Devlin's remark is significant here:

In these poems it cannot honestly be said that there is any absolute tragedy, any more than there was an absolute tragedy in Gethsemane on Maundy Thursday evening. . . He knows as he knew fourteen years ago, only far more vividly now, that some day he will come to find the Risen Jesus who is now so carefully disguised: "The keener to come at the comfort for feeling the combating keen" ('The Wreck' 25). And we know that it was so (*Ignatian Inspiration* 899).

Hopkins' years of scrimmage and rumpus in life petered out as he once again felt the divine "dearest freshness . . . with warm breast and with ah! bright wings" ('God's Grandeur'). In the early afternoon of 8 June 1889, at the age of forty five, out of his weary crestfallen heart, there came a euphonious whisper: "I am so happy; I am so happy." He completed his earthly sojourn with a hope against all hopelessness. Gerard Manley Hopkins died with the hope of a new dawn in his life that he was surely returning to the never ending joy of his eternal home; he was also sure, as he told in his letter to his friend Robert Bridges on 1 April 1885, that a day would come when 'the world which condemned his art and saw nothing in it would take a generation to understand him and then would go to him again'. The divine Providence, in a mysterious way, turned Hopkins' misfortune of not getting public recognition of his art during his life time into good fortune. Perhaps Hopkins got his rightful place in world literature today because he was not published at a time when he would only have been misunderstood and underestimated.

Hopkins in his sermons recreates for us the scenes of Christ's Death and Resurrection: "Then the clouds gathered, the hour of storm, the power of darkness came, the sun got bloody red, Christ was crucified; and his enemies that loved darkness better than light triumphed that he was gone. On Easter day this same sun had another rising, Christ rose from the dead, and soon on Ascension Day one may say another set, for Christ was seen no more" (*Sermons* 40). The scene of crucifixion brightens up and gives way to the mystical glory of the Resurrection. Nights which figure predominantly in his writings now make way for the bright day. Each new day is an Easter happening that releases the Pentecostal

spirit, just as each sunset runs with the crimsoning of the Cross: “And though the last lights off the black West went / Oh, morning, at the brown brink eastward, springs – / Because the Holy Ghost over the bent / World broods with warm breast and with ah: bright wings” (“God’s Grandeur”). The fourth week deals with the Risen Life, where scars are turned to radiance and one is bidden to cast off sorrow, think joyous thoughts and see how Christ the Comforter in perfect joy uses all of them as playful devices of friendship to console his friends. The gloriously tumultuous poem on ‘The Comfort of the Resurrection’ comes after the “terrible sonnets” like a diamond forged out of pressure. The suffering servant of Yahweh in Hopkins now begins to see “A beacon, an eternal beam.” Therefore Hopkins sings, “Manshape, . . . / . . . death blots black out; . . . beats level. Enough! The Resurrection, / A heart’s-clarion! Away grief’s gasping, joyless days, dejection.” Through the power of Christ’s resurrection, Hopkins now realizes that he who was “This Jack, joke, poor potsherd . . . / Is immortal diamond”.

It is not a gentle, romantic kind of peace that the poet speaks of in the poem. Peace here becomes a terribly explosive and extremely turbulent experience like the peace said in the Book of Isaiah in the Bible: “There will be peace . . . in my days . . . Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain” (Isaiah 39: 8 – 40: 4). This resurrection experience is neither soft nor calm but it is eternal. The whole spiritual development is recapitulated and clarified in ‘That Nature is a Heraclitean fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection’. So Hopkins wrote in his retreat notes: “There is a happiness, hope, the anticipation of happiness

hereafter: it is better than happiness, but it is not happiness now. It is as if one were dazzled by a spark or star in the dark, seeing it but not seeing by it: we want a light shed on our way and a happiness spread over our life” (*Sermons* 262).

Once again, as in the bright sonnets, the poet begins with a detailed description of the scenery in Nature and finds light again, but the light is a different one from the bright light of his early sonnets. Earlier he sang in ‘Hurrahing in Harvest’: “And, eyes, heart, what looks, what lips yet gave you a / Rapturous love’s greeting of realer, of rounder replies?” Now in his final surrender – death, he finds peace and reconciliation with God and everlasting life after the turbulent period. When he sent Bridges the sonnet dedicated to him ‘R.B.’, he was ill; but even this illness which coincided with ‘the most pressing time of university work’, brought him unexpected relief. It worsened, but he endured it cheerfully. He wrote to his mother “At many such times, I have been in a sort of extremity of mind, now I am the placidest soul in the world” (Abbott 197). This ray of light peculiar to the spirit of the fourth week of the Ignatian exercises breaks through the path to remind him of the sea of glory awaiting him when the trial is passed and he may at last “bathe in his fall-gold mercies, to breathe in his all-fire glances” (‘The Wreck’ 23), for we hear him speak of the ordeal as past: “That night, that year / Of now done darkness I wretch lay wrestling with (my God!) my God” (‘Carrion Comfort’).

Notes

‘The Spiritual Exercises’ prescribed by St. Ignatius of Loyola are a month long programme of meditations, prayers, considerations

and contemplative practices. He organized these exercises into four weeks. The third week of the Exercises is concerned with the Passion of Christ and is intended to confirm the exercitant in the options s/he has taken to follow Christ even up to crucifixion. The purpose of this week's exercises is sorrow with Christ in sorrow, a broken spirit with Christ so broken; tears, and interior suffering because of the great suffering which Christ endured for me.

Works Cited

- Abbott, Claude Colleer, ed. *Further Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins including his Correspondence with Coventry Patmore*. 1956. London; Oxford University Press, 1970.
- Boyle, Robert. *Metaphor in Hopkins*. Chapel Mill: The University of North Caroline Press, 1961.
- Devlin, Christopher S.J. ed. *The Sermons and Devotional Writings of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. London: Oxford University Press, 1959.
- Devlin, Christopher. "The Ignatian Inspiration of Gerard Hopkins", *Blackfriars*, XVI, 189. Dec. 1935, 887-900.
- Gardner, W. H., and N. H. MacKenzie, eds. *The Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. Fourth Edition. 1967; London: Oxford University Press, 1970.
- Leavis, F. R. *New Bearings in English Poetry: A Study of the Contemporary Situation*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1950.

Loyola, Ignatii De. *Exercitia Spiritualia*. tr. A. R. P. Joanne Roothaan. Romae: DomusEditorialisMarietti, 1928.

Pick, John. *Gerard Manley Hopkins: Priest and Poet*. London: Oxford University Press, 1966.

Ogres, Ogresses and Outcastes: The Conflicts of Subaltern Representation in the *Mahabharatha* and *Randam Oozham*

Sreedevi K. Menon

The author must be situated at the boundary of the world he is bringing into being as the active creator of this world, for his intrusion to that world destroys its aesthetic stability.

Mikhail Bakhtin

The *Mahabharatha*, the longest epic in the world, presumed to be composed between 300 BCE and 300 CE continues to enthrall readers and critics alike for its heterogeneity, polyphony and philosophical import, not to mention its vastness. The text has had immense adaptations and re-tellings from multiple perspectives of its various characters, dominant as well as marginalised in the epic. The *Randam Oozham* is a Malayalam re-telling of the *Mahabharatha* from the perspective of the second Pandava, Bhimasena. Jnanapedam laureate M.T. Vasudevan Nair is a writer who has carved a niche for himself in Malayalam literature with quite a large number of works that realistically represent human predicament at its best. *Randam Oozham* won for him the Vayalar

Award and the Muttath Varkey Foundation Award and the novel attracted a lot of critical attention for its realistic treatment of the epic.

Stripped off its mystical and fantastic elements, the novel explores the life behind the myth, its dismal side and the humane elements therein. As the narrative moves through the mindscape of the protagonist, it does not fail to articulate the angst and predicament of the characters marginalised in the epic. Seen from the perspective of a contemporary popular writer, the epic sheds its embellishment in the novel to expose the inner conflict of the powerful protagonist caught between the power structure he is expected to sustain and his heart that is sensitive to the real world outside.

This article attempts to compare and contrast the representation of the demons in the epic and the novel to reveal the socio-cultural aspects of the society portrayed in the epic and its relevance in contemporary society in matters of representing the marginalised groups in literature. Apart from reading the *Mahabharatha* as a legend of a dynasty, a curious reader could also approach it as a socio-cultural chronicle that the bards composed for the reigning kings, interspersing history with fantasy and magic and that which passed later from the oral form to the written through the hands of the dominant classes to be interpolated with the ideology they aspired to propagate and establish.

Although the bards spoke for the reigning kings, eulogising their triumphs and lamenting their losses, they did represent the marginalised voices, though in a lighter vein. The marginalised voices, thus lying dormant in the multiple narratives of the epic, have been

fictitiously developed and reconstructed by Nair in the novel that effectively narrates the existential dilemma of the protagonist who suffers severe identity crisis on account of his dubious lineage and his secondary status despite his powerful body and selfless heart. The novel vividly presents the polyphonic elements in the epic, thus bringing out the double-consciousness in the narrative that has been suppressed, but nevertheless exists.

Bhimasena has been hailed as the most powerful character in the epic. He is the son of Kunti born of the wind god. The character of Bhima, however, does not purely conform to the Aryan standards pertaining to bodily features and character. Many critics have attributed a demoniac slant to the character of Bhima taking into consideration his huge body, strength, his ability to see in the dark, his capacity to fight and kill demons and his drinking the blood of Dushasana to avenge Draupadi's humiliation. It is this discord between Bhima's lineage and his nature that Nair exploits to take him away from the centre and place him on the periphery of the power structure so as to get a different perspective of the legend. Through the eyes of Bhima, the lofty epic assumes the garb of a power discourse unveiling the voids and unreckoned voices of the marginalised. The Rakshasas who are 'othered' in the epic find voice in the novel which creates a distinct cultural space for them, positioning them as people outside the social structure with distinct identities and values different from that of the dominant social class.

The hymns of the Rig Veda (9.112), written presumably in 1500 BCE gives a picture of the society it represents and there are a lot of details about family life, daily tasks, craftsmanship, offerings

for sacrifice, and even about the diverse vocations in practice at the time. However, the rigid hereditary system of the professions characteristic of the caste system we see in contemporary India does not seem to be established during the period, when people doing different vocations could belong to the same family. The Vedic people at first distinguished only two classes (*varnas*) – themselves (Aryas) and that of the people they conquered- whom they called Dasas or Dasyus, or, sometimes, Panis. Asko Parpola, in his essay “The Coming of the Aryans to Iran and India and the Cultural and Ethnic Identity of the Dasas; The Problem of the Aryans and the Soma,” assumes that these conquered people might have been survivors of early migrations of Vedic people, or just the people who spoke languages other than Sanskrit, or a branch of the Indo-Iranian people who practised a different religion. In her book *Early India: From the Origins to 1300*, Romila Thapar observes how in the Indo- Iranian Avesta, “daha” and “dahyu” designate “other people.” Eventually, as the invaders acquired power over the conquered and their land, “Dasa” came to be used to denote a slave or subordinate. The late parts of the Rig Veda refer to the children of Brahmins born of slave women as “Dasi-putras” which also indicates the acceptance of interclass sexual relationships, if not marriage. There are evidences that the Vedic people took significant parts of their material culture from communities in place in India before they arrived, Dasas of one sort or another. The Dasas may also have introduced new ritual practices such as those recorded in the Atharva Veda, which the Vedic people generally refrained from practising.

But by the end of the Rig Vedic period, the class or the Varna system was in place. The endorsement of the Varna system could be seen in the later parts of the Rig Veda, by the anecdote in the “Purusha-Suktha,” that describes the dismemberment of the cosmic giant, “Purusha” who was sacrificed in a Vedic sacrifice for the creation of the universe (“Purusha Suktha” [10.9]). According to the poem, the four classes of society came from the appropriate parts of the “Purusha” (the Primeval Man). His mouth became the priest (the Brahmin, master of sacred speech), his arms became the Kshatriyas; his thighs, the commoner, that is, the Vaishyas and his feet became the Shudras. Though the anecdote has been condemned as a Brahminical fantasy by critics, the matrix of power thus established became a documented social criterion to emphasise the inferiority of the Shudras and the superiority of the Brahmins.

Basically, the Varna System pertained to a two-fold division in the society- the three classes versus the ‘Other’, namely, the Shudras. Thus from the times depicted in the earlier quoted poem from the Rig Veda, the ancient Indian society went a long way to transform itself into a stringent system where birth and vocation determined the destiny of the individual and his relationship with the rest of the society.

The three upper classes were called ‘twice-born’ because of the second birth through the ritual of initiation by which a man was born again as a fully developed member of the community. One could do sacrifices only after he was initiated and so, apart from the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas could also perform sacrifices, the hallmark of aristocracy and social privilege. The

Shudras were excluded from the initiation ritual and consequently were deprived of the right to perform sacrifices or participate in the various aspects of elite religious life as could be seen in the description of the sacrificial arena of Yudhishtira's 'Rajasuya' sacrifice. "O king, that platform crowded with gods, Brahmanas and great Rishis looked extremely handsome like the wide expanse of the firmament studded with stars. O monarch, there was then no Shudra near that platform of Yudhishtira's mansion nor anybody that was without vows" (*Mb* Book II Rajasuyika Parva Section 35).

The Varna system endowed a superior status to the Brahmins who were followed in hierarchy by the Kshatriyas, the warrior-class, the Vaishyas who included merchants, farmers and herders and the Shudras, the serving class. The system might have developed in an age where the Vedic people strongly felt an urge to carve their tribe identity in the wake of the emergence of other religions like Buddhism and Islam, for instance. According to Wendy Doniger, they chose to call themselves the people of the Vedas, or the people who revere the Brahmins who were the custodians of the Vedas, or the people who have four classes and four stages of life (*varna-ashrama-dharma*, in contrast with Buddhists). Thus, they called themselves "Aryas" which means 'noble' in Sanskrit, in contrast with the "Dasyus" or "Dasas" ('aliens' or 'slaves') or *Mlecchas*, the 'barbarians' (*The Hindus* 26). The attitude of the Aryans to these native people could be encapsulated in a reference in the *Mahabharatha*: "The *Mlecchas* are the dirt of mankind: the oilmen are the dirt of the *Mlecchas*; eunuchs are the dirt of oilmen; they who avail of the priestly ministrations of Kshatriyas, in their sacrifices, are the dirt of eunuchs (*Mb* Book VIII Section 45)."

Manu treats *mlechcha* as a linguistic term, contrasted with “Arya” and “Dasyu” which he clearly regards as linguistic and ethnic terms respectively. Manu categorises those outside the four classes as aliens, the “Dasyus”, whether they speak barbarian (*mlechcha*) languages or Arya languages (*Manusmriti* 10.45). However, not much information is available regarding the beliefs or religious practices of these people. That the *Mlechchas* maintained a linguistic and cultural identity that was clearly discriminated as inferior to the other classes could be substantiated by the instance in the *Mahabharatha* where Vidura gives a hint about the danger of the lac palace to Yudhishtira in the *Mlechcha* dialect so that the Kauravas do not understand (*Mb* Book I Section 147).

Apart from people engaged in specialized professions, caste or *jati* (which means ‘pertaining to birth’ in Sanskrit) also categorised people of alien sects, tribes, people of a particular geographical area and those belonging to different sectarian and economic factions. “Invaders like the Shakas or Kushanas and tribal forest dwellers like the Nishadas, as well as other groups on the margins of settled society, could also be absorbed into a specific caste, often of uncertain class, or sometimes into a class, mainly Kshatriyas for rulers, seldom Brahmins (*The Hindus* 284-85).” Tribes such as Nishadas and Chandalas sometimes seem to have amounted to a fifth *varna* of their own (*Puranas and Acculturation*). The people who remained out of the refined social structure included the sages, the Nishadas and the Rakshasas, the ogres who lived in the forest. While the sages were respected by kings out of fear for their austere powers, the Rakshasas were shunned and dreaded as cannibals. The Nishadas had access to the society outside the forest, but were

put in place as beggars or soldiers to make them dependent on the power-structure and serve it simultaneously. Power that pervades all aspects of the social structure stealthily extends its grip to encompass those that stand outside it as well. The Nishadas and the Rakshasas also get caught in the web of power in various instances in the epic.

The term “subalternity” refers to a condition of subordination brought about by colonization or other forms of economic, social, racial, linguistic, and/or cultural dominance. Subaltern studies is, therefore, a study of power. Who has it and who does not. Who is gaining it and who is losing it. Power is intimately related to questions of representation—to which representations have cognitive authority and can secure hegemony and which do not and cannot. (*Subaltern and Representation: Arguments in Cultural Theory 2*)

The burning of the Nishada woman and her sons in the lac palace by the Pandavas has been adapted in *Randam Oozham* as a manipulative murder planned by Kunti. Kunti describes the Nishada family as sacrificial beings willed by the gods to save the Pandavas from the fatal trap. The arrival of the family occurs soon after the sacrificial animal is ‘silenced’ (88) and offered to the gods and this strengthens the conviction of Kunti who is supported by Yudhishtira who declares that there was no need to fear sin since the victims were Nishadas (90) who were inferior, posited outside the Varna system. While the epic is indifferent to Drona’s demanding Ekallavya’s thumb and justifies it through the concept of *Gurudakshina* , the novel distorts the Ekalavya story in the epic to

suggest that the lost thumb of the tribal boy was demanded not as *Gurudakshina*, but was cut off at night at the command of the ruling dynasty in the interest of Arjuna and presented to Drona (62-63). Nair's contention seems to be the possibility that the bards who composed the legend might have protected their masters, the rulers, simultaneously sympathising with the victims and attributing to them the glory of having become privileged in being part of the sacrifice, the Aryan ritual, they were otherwise forbidden to participate. The *Randam Oozham* thus exposes the hypocrisy and opportunism of the dominant power structure in putting the downtrodden in their place and exploiting their lives and resources for its sustenance.

Randam Oozham earnestly and elaborately recreates the relationship of Bhima with the demoness Hidimbi and presents it as a much fulfilling relationship in contrast with that of Draupadi which was often in the interest of power and selfish motives. Brahminical texts often construct peoples living in remote or mountainous areas as wild just as the White slave-holders considered the Black slaves in Europe and the United States of America. Rakshasas have always been conceived as demonic, passionate and treacherous. Sheldon Pollock enumerates the predominant traits associated with the Rakshasas in his introduction to his translation of Valmiki's "Aranyakanda" of the *Ramayana*: "Rakshasas are creatures polluted by violence, blood, and carnivorous filth, who kill and eat those they kill... At the same time in their libidinized forms, they enact the deepest sexual urges- total abandonment to pleasure, as well as absolute autonomy and power in gratifying lust (III: 83-84)." Pollock identifies three areas where the representation of Rakshasas

are othered: “Outsiders are made other by being represented as deviant- sexually, dietetically, politically deviant (“*Ramayana* and Political Imagination in India” 283).” They are sexually deviant because male Rakshasas were believed to abduct noble women while Rakshasis took the bold initiative to seduce and propose men, an act unseen in noble women. As for diet, Rakshasas are cannibals and they relish the raw flesh of humans they kill. Their political deviance pertains to the supposed absence of self-restraint and discipline in their monarchs.

Instead of representing Hidimbi as an ogress, Nair presents her as a forester with a distinct tribal identity, her looks and ways entirely different from those of the refined society. In *Random Oozham*, Hidimbi is Bhima’s perfect half who goes well with his crude personality. She complements his demoniac self whereas his Kshatriya self exploits her body, love and her son who is sacrificed in the interest of the Pandavas winning the war.

But the *Mahabharatha* recognizes the identity of the Rakshasas much better than it does of the Shudras. The urge in the Rakshasas to preserve their dignity, their detest for exogamy and their preference to be in their realm, the forest, in contrast to the kings who always conquered other kingdoms and ravished the forests is better represented by the epic than the novel which treats the Bhima-Hidimbi relationship only as a power-praxis. Hidimba and Kirmira who fiercely defend their creed and identity in the epic actually lose their agency in the novel. Kirmira’s anger towards Bhima stems from the latter’s intrusion to his territory. “And that fool hath now come into this deep forest of mine, when the night is half

spent, even at the time when we wander about (*Mb* Book III Vana Parva Section 11 25)!” In the *Mahabharatha*, Hidimva is extremely conscious of his distinct creed and is eager to protect it even if it be at the cost of his sister’s death. His furious words at seeing Hidimbi disguised as a beautiful woman trying to entice Bhima, reflects his aversion for the so called civilized human beings living in cities. “Fie on thee, thou unchaste woman! Thou art even now desirous of carnal intercourse and solicitous of doing me an injury. Thou art ready to sacrifice the good name and honour of all the Rakshasas (*Mb* Book I Hidimva-Vadha Parva: Section 155).” The sacrifice of Hidimbi’s son Ghatolkacha to save the life of Arjuna is clearly revealed in the epic as it is in the novel.

The Kshatriyas’ dire need to exploit the resources of the outcastes, and their urge to suppress any possibility of the latter’s ascension to power could be commonly found in the injustice meted out to Ekalavya and Ghatolkacha both in the epic as well as in the novel. Baka who is a cannibal demon in the epic is portrayed as an agent of King Vaitrakeya who assigns him the duty of acquiring human beings for the king’s sacrifice (*Random Oozham* 104). Hidimbi, in contrast to Draupadi and Balandhara, is thoroughly neglected by the protagonist in the novel as they are in the epic since sex and procreation was treated much differently from marriage that was strictly a social institution fostered by interests of wealth and power. But the epic expresses Bhima’s callousness through Kirmira who comes to take revenge on Bhima for killing his brother Baka and friend Hidimva. “It is also this one of wicked soul who formerly slew my dear friend Hidimva, living in this forest and ravished his sister (*Mb* Book III Kirmira-Vadha Parva Section 11 25)!”

The novel foregrounds the power-hungry ruling class indulged in all the tactics aimed at acquiring power. It subverts the very identity of the leading characters, including Bhima and Yudhishtira, pushing them down from the pedestal of godliness to the margins they always had aversion for. Bhima finally comes to terms with his self, his infatuation and his ego to become enlightened at the end of the novel.

Random Oozham is a brave attempt to read the unseen sides of the epic to render due voice and space to the plea of the unreckoned identities lurking in the margins. The questionable morality of the Pandavas, the godliness of Krishna and the status of the downtrodden and the outcastes are addressed in the novel more than they are contested in the epic. The burning of the Khandava forest by Arjuna and Krishna is portrayed in the novel as the conquest and evacuation of the Naga tribes who are presented as aboriginal *Mlecchas* in the novel (147). Bhima's valour is credited to the skills he learned from the Nagas in childhood when he was rescued by them from death when Duryodhana tried to poison him (56-57). Thus the novel also translates the subtle poetic language of the epic narrative into a realistic one, depicting the triumphs of the Aryans as the result of their invasion and conquest of the aboriginal land they intruded and acquired. More than a fictitious rendering of the epic, *Random Oozham* becomes a social novel that problematises social, political and cultural events portrayed in the *Mahabharatha*.

Works Cited

Beverley, John. *Subalternity and Representation: Arguments in Cultural Theory*. North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1999. Print.

- Doniger, Wendy. *The Hindus: An Alternative History*. New Delhi: Speaking Tiger, 2015. Print.
- . *The Rig Veda*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981. Print.
- Ganguli, Kisari Mohan. *The Mahabharatha*. Vol. 1. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1982. Print.
- Manusmriti*. Trans. Wendy Doniger and Brian K. Smith. New Delhi: Penguin, 1991. Print.
- Nair, M.T. *Randam Oozham*. Thrissur: Current Books, 2013. Print.
- Parpola, Asko. "The Coming of the Aryans to Iran and India and the Cultural and Ethnic Identity of the Dasas; The Problem of the Aryans and the Soma," *Studia Orientalia*. Helsinki, 1988. Print.
- Pollock, Sheldon, trans. *The Ramayana of Valmiki: An Epic of Ancient India, Aranyakanda*, ed. Robert P. Goldman. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991. Print.
- . "Ramayana and the Political Imagination in India". *Journal of Asian Studies* 52:2, 1993. Print.
- Richman, Paula. "Why did Bhima Wed Hidimbaa?", *Reflections and Variations on the Mahabharatha*, ed. T.R.S. Sharma. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 2009. Print.
- Saraswathy, Jnanananda. *Mahabharathasarasarvaswam*. Vol.1. Kanyakumari: Anandakuteeram, 1990. Print.
- Thapar, Romila. *Early India: From the Origins to 1300*. London: Penguin, 2002. Print.

Rohinton Mistry's *Family Matters*: A Postcolonial Reading

Neena Kishor

Postcolonialism as a literary discipline has gained a wide significance since the early 1990's. According to Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin:

Post-colonial literatures are a result of the interaction between imperial culture and the complex of indigenous cultural practices... Once colonized people had cause to reflect on and express the tension that ensued from this problematic and contested, but eventually vibrant and powerful mixture of imperial language and local experience, post-colonial 'theory' came into being. (2)

Postcolonialism has paved the way for many writers to voice the consequences of colonialism as well as colonial oppression. It discusses different kinds of experiences such as slavery, dislocation, diaspora, race, ethnicity, gender, ambivalence, suppression, education and the like.

Rohinton Mistry is a contemporary, postcolonial, Indian born Canadian writer. He is of Parsi origin and this has left an imprint on most of his works. *Family Matters* is Mistry's third novel which

was preceded by *Such a long journey* and *A Fine Balance*. Talking of the ‘image’ that prompted him to write *Family Matters*, Mistry says to Nermeen Shaikh ,

With *Family Matters*, the image that started it was the old man with Parkinson’s and I think that may have come from a short story I wrote about ten years ago. That story, about fifteen pages long, narrated in the first person, is about a man in his mid eighties who is slightly paranoid and feels he is being exploited and ill-treated by his family. He has these delusions and lies awake at night and tells his story. I enjoyed that character very much so that is where this image may have come from to write *Family Matters*.

Family Matters narrates the story of three generations of a Parsi family and is set in Bombay of the 1900s. Nariman Vakeel is a retired English professor who is seventy nine years old and is slowly deteriorating due to Parkinson’s disease. In the beginning of the novel Nariman shares a flat, ‘Chateau Felicity’ with his step-children Jal and Coomy, who are soon getting tired of the old widower. Nariman was indirectly responsible for the death of their mother, Yasmin Contractor whom he was forced to marry taking into consideration the wishes of his orthodox Parsi family despite his love for Lucy, a catholic girl. He still pines for his lost love Lucy, in his dreams.

Nariman breaks his ankle during one of the walks he loves to take in the evenings. His step-children hastily moves him to ‘Pleasant Villa’, the house of Roxana (his daughter with Yasmin), on the pretext that he needs a cheerful atmosphere. But the house is so crammed that his older grandson Murad has to move to the balcony and

Jehangir, his younger grandson, has to sleep on the floor. Though the family tries to be accommodating, Roxana's short-tempered husband Yezad finds it difficult to make ends meet. Fights become very common in the house that Yezad turns to religion for solace. Meanwhile, weighed down by guilt, Jal and Coomy began repairing their home which they had sabotaged to prevent Nariman from returning. This ultimately leads to the death of Coomy, and Jal invites Roxana's family to occupy 'Chateau Felicity'. Nariman finally succumbs to Parkinson's disease and dies a year later and the family's happiness is sapped when Yezad who has now become a religious fanatic lays down the rules at home based on the orthodox Parsi religion. As the novel comes to an end we see the history of their family repeating itself as Yezad prepares to fight against Murad for his relationship with a non Parsi girl as Nariman's father did with him for his love for Lucy.

Dislocation is one of the major concepts in postcolonial discourse. The term incorporates the various experiences associated with displacement from one place to another due to imperial occupation. This displacement can be willing or unwilling or it can also be a result of slavery, imprisonment, invasion and settlement. The term, according to Ashcroft et al., describe all those who "in a sense" need to be "'reinvented' in language, narrative and in myth" (86). A glimpse into the Parsi history shows that there were originally natives of Iran. In the seventh century they migrated to India to avoid forcible conversion to Islam due to the Arab conquest in their country. Thus they were dislocated from their homeland and in India they lost their identity as Iranians and came to be known as

Parsis. They agreed to the proposal put forward by Jadav Rana, the King of Gujarat, and gave up their weapons and adopted the local language and dress in return for refuge in Gujarat.

The Parsis form a diaspora in India. Ashcroft et al. states that “diasporas have come to mean cultural minorities in social power, if not always in number, (eg. The African diaspora in the Caribbean) and as such are always seen to be establishing their sense of identity and cultural affiliation, their sense of home, their sense of subject position, against the background of a ‘majoritarian’ rule” (426). Parsis in India are a minority in number as well as social power. Taking into consideration the power structure, they feel that their very existence is threatened due to other dominant communities. In *Family Matters* the Shiv Sena is portrayed as a dominant power and the Parsis live in constant fear of them.

Mistry also realistically portrays the present miserable state of the Parsi diaspora. They basked in the elite status they enjoyed once in India. Dr. Fitter, a Parsi, laments the pathetic situation of the community today,

...Parsi men of today [are] useless, dithering idiots, the race [has] deteriorated. When you think of our forefathers, the industrialists and shipbuilders who established the foundation of modern India, the philanthropists who gave us our hospitals and schools and libraries and baags, what lustre they brought to our community and the nation (51).

Mistry voices his concern for the diminishing number of Parsis as it is nearing its extinction. He laments, “When a culture vanishes, humanity is the loser. To think that we Parsis were the ones who

built this beautiful city and made it prosper. And in a few more years, there won't be any of us left alive to tell the tale”(416).

Ambivalence is a term that has been adopted from psychoanalysis into postcolonial discourse by Homi Bhabha. It suggests the simultaneous attraction and repulsion that exemplifies the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. This relationship is considered ambivalent because the colonized does not simply show complete opposition to the colonizer. The concept of ambivalence in *Family Matters* is best seen in Mr. Kapur, the benevolent employer of Yezad at Bombay Sporting Goods. He gets emotional and at times poetic when he talks about Bombay. He loves collecting pictures of the Bombay of the past. Pictures of the place that was untouched by modernity or as Mr. Kapur puts it “... my beautiful Bombay's baby pictures. Priceless. Her time of innocence.” (153). Mr. Kapur not only buries himself in the past of Bombay but also its present. As Yezad puts it “he also burrowed in the complicated morass of contemporary politics, following every turn, every new abomination perpetrated by the government , which, he said, hurt him as though his own flesh had been wounded” (154).

He once narrated to Yezad a common scene in the railway station of Bombay. A train which was packed with people was leaving a station and a man was running alongside with his hands raised. Suddenly people from the running train offered their hands and pulled him inside the train, safe and sound. Mr.Kapur continues,

Whose hands were they, and whose hands were they grasping? Hindu, Muslim, Dalit, Parsi, Christian? No one knew and no one cared. Fellow passengers, that's all they

were. And I stood there on the platform for a long time, Yezad, my eyes filled with tears of joy, because what I saw told me there was still hope for this great city. (160)

All these show without doubt the boundless love that Mr. Kapur has for Bombay. As much as he loves to talk and collect pictures of the glorious past of Bombay, he still embraces modernity and to be more specific the ways and manners of the colonizer. This brings out the ambivalent attitude of Mr. Kapur. He is the wealthy owner of a sports shop and he has a suitcase he mentions to Yezad frequently about, which he claims to be his pension planning. His office though tiny is air- conditioned. He spends a lot of money to satisfy his whims and fancies. He travels only in a car and he explains, “I never travel by train, I see how crowded they are when I drive past the tracks” (159). He uses English for his day to day conversation.

Mr. Kapur filled with his romantic notions about Bombay, once ran alongside a train with his arms raised so that the passengers could pull him up to safety but nobody helped him. A dejected Mr. Kapur narrates, “I’m also their Bombay brother, am I not? And they just stared through me. Others seemed to find me amusing, turning to one another to laugh.” (347) Yezad observes Mr. Kapur’s appearance at that moment and can’t help but opine, “Stylish, with a touch of class” (347). Though Mr. Kapur gets eloquent when he talks of Bombay and its fall from a glorious past and the present deplorable situation due to industrialization brought in by the colonizer, his whole appearance and mannerisms seem to scream out, ‘I am not one of you’. Mr. Kapur has taken on the ways and manners of the colonizer, not quite willing to depart from it.

Ethnicity is another key concept in postcolonial discourse. Ashcroft et al. points out that “A person’s ethnic group is such a powerful identifier because while he or she chooses to remain in it, it is an identity that cannot be denied, rejected or taken away by others” (98). Mistry has carefully embedded within *Family Matters* the customs, history, issues and experiences that are unique to the Parsi diaspora. According to Jagroop S. Biring, “Living amidst the hegemonic forces of the majority community has given rise to a strong feeling of community brotherhood among the Bombay Parsis”(60). The Parsis are an ethnic group that value exclusivity. They tend to keep to themselves. When Nariman hurts his ankle Jal approaches Dr. Fitter, a Parsi, to take a look at Nariman’s leg. He was taken to ‘Parsi General Hospital’. When Roxana couldn’t find anything big enough to cover the balcony to protect her son from the wrath of nature as he had to sleep in the balcony due to Nariman’s arrival, it was Villie the Cardmaster, yet another Parsi woman, whom Yezad approaches for help. For his aftertoon tea break Yezad goes to an ‘Irani restaurant’. During the days when Nariman and Lucy were together they followed a routine – cinema in the afternoon, a long walk and then dinner at a restaurant like Volga or Parisian. Even here the choice of the restaurant is noteworthy. Sweetmeats for occasions and parties are ordered from the ‘Parsi Dairy Farm’.

The names of the various Parsi characters are significant. When Jehangir asked whether he could change his name to Jehan as a short form, Yezad said, “You are a Parsi so you have a Persian name. Be proud of it, it’s not to be thrown out like an old shoe” (247). Yezad explained to his son that his name meant ‘conquerer of the world’, Murad, ‘boon or blessing’, Roxana, ‘the dawn’,

Yezad, 'Guardian angel' and the name Nariman is from the Shah-Nama story. Nariman was the great grandfather of the hero, Rustam. Jehangir contemplated that "their names taken together made the perfect family : they were blessed, they possessed the whole world, they had their own guardian angel and Mummy's dawn light shone upon all of them." (289)

In the novel, stress is laid on the honesty of the Parsi community especially through the brave deed of Yezad's father who was the chief cashier in a bank. It is another distinguishing feature of this ethnic group. Explosions occurred while he was carrying five lakh rupees from the branch office to the head office. Risking his own life in the midst of the commotion he brought the money safely to the head office.

The honesty of the Parsis is also emphasised through Mr. Kapur's testimony of Yezad. At the end of the day in Bombay Sporting Goods, Mr. Kapur would open a large suitcase in which all the money from the cash transactions is kept. Mr. Kapur didn't mind Yezad being present in the room during this routine for he says, "It [is] a blessing to have a Parsi employee, I don't need to worry about cash sticking to the lining of your trousers. If only there were more communities like yours"(156) . An embarrassed Yezad replies "I'm sure we have our share of crooks and good-for-nothing loafers" for which Mr. Kapur remarks, "Oh, don't be modest, the Parsi reputation for honesty is well known. And even if it's a myth- there is no myth without truth, no smoke without fire"(156).

In *Family Matters* Mistry also lays focus on the racial purity that the Parsis strove to preserve. Although there are quite a few

examples in the novel, the most potent is the love affair of Nariman and also his grandson, Murad. Nariman was in love with Lucy Braganza, a Goan and a catholic. Towards the end of the novel Murad has begun a relationship with Anjali, a Maharastrian. Though decades apart the consequences of a relationship with a non-Parsi is no different. Both of them have to face strong opposition from the family. When Nariman tried to persuade his father he said that, "she might be a wonderful person, as gracious and charming as the Queen of England, but she was still unsuitable for his son because she was not a Zoroastrian, case closed" (132). Despite this Nariman one day brought Lucy home which lead to an outrage from his father- "This son of mine has turned my house into a raanwada, bringing his whore over her! It's the kind of immorality that's destroying the Parsi community!"(267).

We find history repeating itself in Murad's circumstance too. When Yezad sees Murad with Anjali he angrily shouts, "I'm warning you, in this there can be no compromise. The rules, the laws of our religion are absolute; this Maharashtrian cannot be your girlfriend"(482). He continues "You can have any friends you like, any race or religion, but for a serious relationship, for marriage, the rules are different... We are a pure Persian race, a unique contribution to this planet, and mixed marriages will destroy that" (482). Nariman's affair is more tragic because after many years, at the age of forty two, he succumbs to the wishes of his family and marries Yasmin which ultimately culminates in the deaths of both Lucy and Yasmin.

Mistry has carved for himself a remarkable place as a postcolonial writer and a postcolonial reading of *Family Matters* show that through the story of three generations of a Parsi family, settled in Bombay, Mistry has subtly yet potently touched upon a few concerns of postcolonialism. J.G. Duresh, has rightly pointed out that, "in the case of Mistry in addition to post-colonial concerns of narrating country and community there is an exigent need to write about his community. As it is verging on extinction he wants to leave a record of it for the benefit of posterity" (93).

Works Cited

- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. New York : Routledge, 2006. Print.
- . *Postcolonial Studies The Key Concepts*. New York: Routledge, 2013. Print.
- Biring, Jagroop S. "Rohinton Mistry's *Family Matters*: a Critique of Ethnic Discourse." *The Quest* 20.1 (Jun 2006):54-6. Print.
- Duresh, J.G. "Reclaiming Racial Identity : an Analysis of Parsi Community in Rohinton Mistry's *Family Matters*." *The Atlantic Literary Review Quarterly* 7.3 (Jul-Sep 2006): 92-100. Print.
- Mistry, Rohinton. *Family Matters*. London:Faber and Faber, 2002. Print.
- Shaikh, Nermeen. "Rohinton Mistry *Family Matters* and Literary Ones. " *Asia Society*, 1 Nov. 2002. Web. 14 April. 2014. < <http://asiasociety.org/rohinton-mistry-family-matters-and-literary-ones> >

Voices of the Third World Feminine: A Riveting Journey through Nawal El- Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*

Kavitha N

The post colonial third world writing of the oppressed has its own way of self expression. To figure out the voices in the third world women's writing is complex. The reflection of women as oppressed, women as the other, women as body and women as marginalized is reflected in these writings. The novel, *Woman at Point Zero* (1975), by Nawal El- Saadawi, one of the founder figures of Egyptian feminism, stands as a text of women's multiple experiences that expose the problems faced by women of the Middle East which represents the heterogeneity of third world women's experience. The lower class woman's voice intentionally dominates or managed to find space through the text. Saadawi's writings were banned for eleven years under Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, her books were censored in Jordan, Libya, and Saudi Arabia, and eventually she was imprisoned by Sadat for speaking against male domination in Egypt.

The different subjugating conditions that women are confronted with in the Middle East include domestic violence, sexual abuse, female genital mutilation, child-marriage, bride-burning,

discrimination in religious institutions and work place and other harmful cultural practices that inhibit the personal development of women in the society. Nawal El Saadawi's portraiture of this grim reality in *Woman at Point Zero* brings forth the various phases of injustices and abuse that women grapple with in phallogocentric societies. Saadawi's research of women political prisoners, published as *Women and Neurosis* in Egypt in 1976, aptly describes the 'nervous conditions' of Egyptian women's lives. Her writing of *Woman at Point Zero*, on the other hand, recounts a woman's individual story, described by Saadawi herself as half way between fiction and fact.

Woman at Point Zero opens with the author, a woman psychologist trying to extract the story behind her patient Firdaus, a prisoner who awaits death sentence at Qanatir prison. She is a mysterious, ex-prostitute who refuses to speak with anyone in or out of the prison. After a long persuasion Firdaus agrees to speak to the psychologist, and the novel is in the form of a life narrative.

Let me speak. Do not interrupt me. I have no time to listen to you. They are coming to take me at six o'clock this evening. I shall no longer be here. Nor will I be in any place known to man. This journey to a place unknown to everybody on this earth fills me with pride. All my life I have been searching for something that would fill me with pride, make me feel superior to everyone else, including kings, princes and rulers(9).

The text is a feminine reading of social, economic, and political factors that define women's oppression within Egyptian society, prostitution and the challenges in understanding the conditions of

women's lives in the third world. These conditions subvert her position of privilege within the existing relations of power and gender politics. The protagonist was subjected to abuse, oppression and abandonment, being taken advantage of on all levels, and of consistent rejection, all through her life, by nearly every human she encountered from child to adulthood. The figure of the female prostitute signifies the 'other', the nation prostituted to the colonizer for superficial gains, bands of gold, and the false beauties of Western modernization.

In giving voice to Firdaus, who is imprisoned for murdering a pimp, *Woman at Point Zero* may be viewed as a response to a tradition of Arab literature that has failed to give women a voice other than that which is dislocated in patriarchal discourse. The protagonist Firdaus evolves herself from being a daughter, to a wife, to a prostitute, to an office employee, and finally back to a prostitute. As a child, she is sexually abused by her uncle; as a married woman, she is beaten by her husband. As an office worker, she does not make enough money to maintain the privileged standard of living she had as a prostitute. During her initial months as a prostitute, her pimp takes advantage of her; it is not until Firdaus strikes out on her own that she finds any degree of freedom, agency, and self-worth. When Firdaus was a child, she was denied food while her father ate a full dinner; when she was married, her miserly husband complained if he thought she ate too much. When she was a prostitute, she had the money to buy and eat what she wanted. By the end of the text, Firdaus comes to the conclusion that Egyptian women are oppressed no matter what they do. She asserts that "All women are prostitutes of one kind or another" (91). They sell themselves to husbands for

food and shelter; unmarried women often “sell” themselves sexually for promotions or raises at their jobs. In a system where she felt she had no freedom and was subservient to men, active prostitution gave her the most liberty and agency possible.

Even though Firdaus says that prostitution gave her freedom, she hated the circumstances which forced her to be a prostitute. But she concluded that, in a culture where women were being taken advantage of at every turn, prostitution gave her some of that power back. She says:

A woman’s life is always miserable. A prostitute, however, is a little better off . . . The fact that I rejected [men’s] noble attempts to save me, my insistence on remaining a prostitute, proved to me this was my choice and I had some freedom, at least the freedom to live in a situation better than that of other women (97).

Firdaus uses prostitution as a method of finding freedom rather than enslaving herself. To say that sex work rendered her subservient to men does not truly hold up when she had already endured a clitoridectomy, sexual abuse, and a forced marriage. Prostitution does not render her more enslaved in fact, it gives her the freedom she craved. Clitoridectomy, also known as Female Genital Mutilation, is a common practice in many traditional African societies. It is a traditional practice in which a person, sometimes unskilled or a health worker, cuts off parts or whole organs of the female genitalia usually using the knife or razor blade, which for the most part is unsterilized. . . It is considered, variously, a cleansing ritual from evil spirits, a female rite of passage, a guarantor of a woman’s chastity

and her marriageability, and a boost to fertility or to a man's sexual pleasure (Salami 37). It is terrible to know that this practice is carried out by elderly women who have gone through the same painful exercise that is enforced by traditional customs and they know the devastating effect of this mutilation. The woman is mutilated both physically and psychologically.

The notion that the girl-child is culturally invisible informs the decision of parents to deny them education. At the tender age of eighteen, Firdaus is forcefully married off to Sheik Mahmoud, a sixty-year old rich widower, by her uncle. He is sixty and has a facial deformity. At first Firdaus runs away, but while she is on the streets, she is terrified by the strange men who approach her, so she returns home. Thus she was married off to Sheikh Mahmoud. Simone de Beauvoir writes, a woman's "sex condemns her to a mutilated and fixed existence" as a mother and wife. Women in the novel are treated similarly to de Beauvoir's description of the 'second sex' (326). The men in Firdaus's society sets themselves up as the 'Subject, he is the Absolute', while the women as 'the other'. Mahmoud was selfish and stingy and beats Firdaus. His facial deformity is a large swelling on his chin with a hole in the middle that leaks pus. He treated her very badly, after going through a long suffering and oppression, Firdaus runs away Firdaus chooses this route and becomes a prostitute herself, following a series of depressing episodes with the men in her life. She ends up in a coffee shop, where she meets Bayoumi, the coffee shop owner, who in turn leads her to prostitution. Firdaus escapes with the help of a neighbour and flees Bayoumi's apartment for the city.

All women are victims of deception. Men impose deception on women and punish them for being deceived, force them down to the lowest level and punish them for falling so low, bind them in marriage and then chastise them with menial service for life, or insults, or blows (94).

Resting by the Nile, Firdaus feels hopeless until a wealthy-looking prostitute, Sharifa approaches her. She takes Firdaus in and teaches her to become a high-class prostitute. As a prostitute, Firdaus describes her body in correspondence to the eyes of the people in her life, with more detachment of feeling than she did prior to becoming a prostitute. Sharifa makes money from Firdaus's body until one night when her friend Fawzy comes over. Firdaus overhears Sharifa and Fawzy fighting over who will get to keep her, so she runs away again. The body of woman depicts many metaphorical meanings in the novel, especially the eyes. Firdaus's eyes depict the lack of control that she has over her life, which are heightened by the descriptions of the moments of when she is prostituting herself. Firdaus also uses her eyes as a way to form social bonds with other people.

Still a prostitute, Firdaus becomes her own boss and eventually has a beautiful home and expensive things. One night, a client named Di'aa tells her that she is not a respectable woman, and Firdaus is devastated. She gives up her nice apartment and beautiful things, moves into a shack, and begins working as an office assistant. There, she realizes that the life of an assistant is in many ways worse than the life of a prostitute. Saadawi says in an interview given to 'Race and Class' Journal:

There are two conflicts. Under the feudal system a woman's labour is under the control of the man and under capitalism she is under the control of the factory owner. Third World women are caught between these two oppressions and the contradictions which are thrown up. In the view of these double oppressions and contradictions we cannot take a middle class position when we begin to discuss the position of Third World women. Because the nature of the oppression of every Third World woman, she carries within her the seeds of a working-class consciousness (181)

Later Firdaus meets a man named Ibrahim, and falls in love with him. They have a relationship, and Firdaus begins to feel that the world is not so horrible, until she discovers that Ibrahim has become engaged to the boss's daughter. Firdaus leaves the company and becomes a prostitute again. She became very expensive and very popular then. Many powerful men come to her, and she turns some of them away to prove that she has power over her own body, and because she despises them.

Yet not for a single moment did I have any doubts about my own integrity and honour as a woman. I knew that my profession had been invented by men, and that men were in control of both our worlds, the one on earth, and the one in heaven (99).

Ibrahim comes to her again, and she realizes he never loved her; rather, he just wanted free sex. A pimp tries to take over Firdaus's life, and for a little while, she lets him. Then they fight and she kills him. Shortly after that, Firdaus meets an Arab prince who

takes her home and offers her \$3,000. She sleeps with him, rips up the money, and slaps him. Terrified, the man calls the police. They came and arrest Firdaus. Firdaus is tried and sentenced to death. She is, she tells Nawal, just waiting to die, because she is excited to go somewhere new. She knows that the men who sentenced her want to kill her because they're afraid of the truth she has to tell, not because they're afraid she'll kill again. Physically and verbally battered, Firdaus retains nonetheless her capacity for agency, which manifests itself in a rage that culminates in the scene of the murder. This is a cathartic moment that helps her realize that anger sets her free to re appropriate language, to face "the savage, primitive truths" (51) and to be beyond fear and death. Firdaus finally names herself: she refuses to be a victim, and is willing to be a criminal because she prefers, as she puts it "to die for a crime I have committed rather than to die for one of the crimes you have committed." (52)

Once she finishes her story, police come to her cell and take her away to be executed. The author leaves the cell and is ashamed of the world. Everywhere she looks, she sees lies and unhappiness. As the author drives away from the prison, she thinks about running people over with her car, but she doesn't. She realizes that Firdaus is braver than she is. When Saadawi braids her identity with that of Firdaus because of their shared experience of pain and betrayal, she gives us a powerful example of a kind of feminine textuality I have called *metissage*, a dialogical hybrid that fuses together heterogeneous elements. (55) We are here in the presence of a mutual and reciprocal "naming" which effaces differences in order to point to an essential truth: that beyond their social differences, the two

women share a nominal essence qua excised women. (56) Since this sexual mutilation is the most important cultural signifier of femininity, “biological” femininity becomes a culturally determined fact, linked to specific local practices.

The subjugation of women is a plague that cuts across African societies. This social evil of marginalization that cuts across an entire continent calls for a concerted effort from women around the world to join hands together and fight for their liberation. Since suffering is a common denominator that they share together, they need to unite and see to its stoppage. Firdaus eventually succeeds in protesting against society and making her voice heard of all of the injustices that are present within it. She faces the ultimate consequence for it, but nevertheless demonstrates the ability of women to deracinate conventional social order. The descriptions Firdaus gives of the many deceiving or controlling eyes in the novel prove that she was not able to affiliate with these other characters. In contrast, the affiliation that is formed with the psychiatrist in the end of the novel allows Firdaus to battle for freedom from the oppressive forces that plague her society.

Woman at Point Zero exemplifies the possibility of resistance to hegemonic pressures and to the cultural master narrative. It is emblematic of the issues raised by Gayatri Spivak in her essay “Can the Subaltern speak” discusses the problem of the voiceless other, the question of objective truth, and the name of the other ‘woman’. Saadawi’s work can be used as an example of the self-reflexive questioning that can make feminist criticism sensitive to the way scholarly discourse names “the other woman” and appropriates her

voice, while at the same time insisting on the need for a universalist perspective on the global condition of oppression of women. The association between the educated researcher and the “un common criminal” changes the terms of the equation between “self” and “other” or “subjective” and “objective,” enacting a transfer of values and feelings, locating the practice of writing at the intersection of multiple forms of knowledge. Saadawi’s text contrasts and collapses the language of patriarchy and the language of the body, bringing into focus those aspects of the narrative that allow for its re-definition as a self-portrait. By appropriating Firdaus’s voice and allowing inter subjective communication to occur between them, Saadawi raises the hope that it is possible to come to an acceptable compromise regarding interpretation and intervention in the local practices of African Islamic societies. If autobiography or life narrative is the means by which African women represent themselves, then to understand their subjective experience of excision, and its affective and cultural ramifications, we need to look for traces of these preoccupations in their texts, and to listen to their silence. In her Author’s Preface, Saadawi states:

Firdaus is the story of a woman driven by despair to the darkest of ends. This woman, despite her misery and despair, evoked in all those who, like me, witnessed the final moments of life, a need to challenge and to overcome those forces that deprive human beings of their right to live, to love and to real freedom (5).

Although Saadawi is emphasizing women issues, especially basic rights of women to survive, these could hardly be taken for

granted in Sadat's Egypt. What makes the story compelling is the highly personal tone, the erosion of distance between the authorial self and the first person narration of Firdaus. Indeed, if Saadawi is first drawn to Firdaus because of her exceptional nature, the focus soon shifts to their shared experience of oppression as women in a patriarchal culture. What the text puts in motion is a strategy of displacement and identification between two women who are "objectively" very different from the point of view of their respective social classes, their education and profession but whose intimate experiences as women are uncannily similar. The narrative suggests that the universal can only be known through the particular or the personal, that it is the concrete subjective experience of this 'other woman' that allows the narrator to relate to her as woman and sister, to give her voice and to make her eternal through her writing.

Works Cited

- Beauvoir, Simone de. Trans. H.M. Parshley. *The Second Sex*. London: Jonathan Cape Thirty Bedford Square, 1953. Print.
- El Saadawi, Nawal. *Woman at Point Zero*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007. Print.
- Salami-Agunloye, Irene. *Cultural Practices and the African Woman as Portrayed in Some Dramatic Texts Women, Theatre and Politics: Contemporary Perspectives*. Ibadan: Saniez Publishers, 2006. Print.

Reconstructing Female Sexuality: Isadora in Erica Jong's *Fear of Flying*

Deepthi V. G

Simone de Beauvoir encapsulated an argument in her classic analysis of women, *The Second Sex* that sets the tone for contemporary feminism: “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman” (273). Contemporary feminist theory has consistently argued that female sexuality has always been ostracised as mysterious or insignificant and that such representations of women’s sexuality, desire and fantasies have been man made. Since female sexuality was mystified, objectified and commercialised in a phallogentric set up, feminists advocated a female look at it and established an autonomous right of women to own their bodies as they are.”The female body”, according to Jasbir Jain “is controlled by patriarchal morality, and by the roles of wifehood and motherhood. Thus any attempt to seek selfhood or project subjectivity, or to work towards self-expression and freedom, has to work through the body” (119). With the advent of sexual revolution, women writers like Erica Jong refuted the male views about women and tried to rewrite the traditional stereotypes associated with women’s sexuality by writing their body and bodily experiences. The main goal of the movement was to alter the private, domestic lives of women.

Poet, novelist and essayist, Erica Jong is an American author best known for her first novel *Fear of Flying*. Jong deals with female subjectivity in most of her novels and makes her stand clear in deconstructing the socially constructed notions of femininity. Erica Jong in her novel, represents and celebrates female sexuality for its power and supposed capacity to escape the structures of dominance and subordination.

Luce Irigaray, a French feminist asserts that psychoanalysis conceptualises female sexuality from a masculine point of view and thus reproduces the norms of patriarchy in a phallus centered discourse. In “Feminism, Marxism and the State: An Agenda for Theory”, Catherine Mackinnon maintains that sexuality is the basis of male domination. For her, sexuality “is a form of power”. She further says:

Gender, as socially constructed embodies it... Women and men are divided by gender, made into sexes we know them, by the social requirements of heterosexuality, which institutionalises male sexual dominance and female sexual submission”. Thus sexuality is the linchpin of gender inequality. (73)

Patriarchy plays an important role in the construction of female sexuality. The patriarchal society confines women by putting the reins on their sexuality. It thus becomes inevitable that women strike back by writing on tabooed subjects like sexuality and gain a break through. Dissatisfied with the conventional representation of female sexuality, women writers, including Jong in full swing started defining female sexuality in their own terms.

The amalgamation of the women's movement and sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s gave momentum to discussions associated with female sexuality. Women started talking about their carnal desires and female sexuality from a female point of view was acknowledged. Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* was one of the most significant theoretical reassessments of the female body. She maintained that only a woman can explain how her body works, what she feels and thinks. Ann Koedt in her essay "The Myth of Vaginal Orgasm" argues that women must redefine their sexuality by eliminating the ideas formed for the benefits of androcentric world. Erica Jong's novel adheres to all these views as she absorbed herself into the conflicts and rebellions of the late 1960s while expressing herself through Isadora. Women writers are often slandered by associating their characters to their own life. Their gendered identity often becomes a stumbling block to self-realisation. This happens both in the case of Erica Jong and her spokesperson Isadora.

Fear of Flying, published in 1973 is an uninhibited story of Isadora Zelda White Stollerman Wing and her desire to fly free in quest of joy and her own true self. Isadora, the narrator of the novel is a 29 year old poet, who has published two books of erotic poetry and is struggling to find her own voice in a patriarchal set up. Erica Jong's brazen protagonist Isadora's adventures in and outside marriage with shocking depiction of sexual acts, use of obscene words, protruding female gaze at male bodies caused a national sensation in the late 70s. Isadora's quest for emancipation and autonomy is meant "to discover and nurture her authentic self through lived experience for self-realization" (Beauvoir 295). By invoking

imaginings of faceless lovers and the “zipless fuck”, Isadora explored alternate spaces and ways of life, in which a woman can embrace the identity of a housewife, mother, student, worker and a lover. She also imagined a life in which sexual craving could be directed towards different people.

The novel begins on an aircraft to Vienna, where Isadora along with her husband Bennet Wing is headed to attend a psychoanalytic conference. Isadora on reaching Vienna decides to involve in a sexual relationship with an English psychoanalyst Adrian. She travels with Adrian in West Europe where she has self-revelation of her purpose, her sexuality and creative faculty. The opening chapter sets the tone for the entire novel and outwardly expresses her nonchalant views on her own problems. As Isadora puts it “there were 117 psychoanalysts on the Pan Am flight to Vienna and I’d been treated by at least six of them. And married a seventh” (5). Isadora’s inner monologue pulls the reader into her literal and symbolic fear of flying and her lifelong struggle with them. As the novel proceeds, it slowly untangles her own conflicts as a writer and as a woman. Isadora wishes to transcend the conventional situations and experience liberation of her own.

Erica Jong through her representational character Isadora and her sexuality, marital and extramarital relationships display a constant struggle against the gendered norms of the society. Writing about sexual experiences or sexual fantasies of a woman from a woman’s point of view was new in the world of literature. Patriarchal power structures have always controlled women by putting the reins of women’s sexuality, which is an important aspect of individual

selfhood. Traveling throughout Europe with Adrian who is not her husband Isadora discovers her true self through her complete loss of security. She is able to discover her hidden potentials through her relationship with Adrian.

In the beginning of the novel she narrates an incident which depicts the psychological conditioning of women, especially regarding their sexuality. Dr. Raymond Schrift plays a role in psychologically moulding her concepts of her sexuality for the first time when Isadora “was fourteen and starving to death in penance for having finger-fucked on her parents living room couch” (7). Dr. Schrift insisted that the horse that Isadora was dreaming about was her father and that her periods would return only if she “ackzept being a vohman” (7). Dr. Smucker, another psycho analyst claims Isadora’s broken leg in her dreams represents her “mutilated genital”. He further says “You always wanted to have a penis and now you feel guilty that you have deliberately broken your leg so that you can have the pleasure of the cast” (11). Their views were based on Freud’s view of women as “incomplete man” and his concept of “penis envy” or “lack”. Women are frequently mediated on the assumption of having penis envy and to cure this deficiency they should enter into marital relationship.

Though woman is defined in terms of her sexuality and subordinated on this account, she is never allowed to enjoy her sexuality. Isadora is not allowed to have absolute control over her sexuality. Her views on her sexuality were indoctrinated by various psychoanalysts who followed Freud and treated her on various occasions. Isadora lacked proper guidance in her puberty stage. Her mother was incapable to clear her fears, doubts and anxieties

about the female body, which experiences much change during this period. As a result, she hates her bohemian mother who failed to teach her daughters about the sexual disturbances that rage the mind of pubertal girls. As she puts it:

Sex. I was terrified of the tremendous power it had over me. the energy, the excitement, the power to make me feel totally crazy!...I sensed, despite her (Judith, Isadora's mother) bohemian talk, that she disapproved of sex, that it was basically unmentionable. . . I was furious with my mother for not teaching me how to be a woman, for not teaching me how to make peace between the raging hunger in my cunt and the hunger in my head. (211 - 212)

Social, Cultural and psychological outlooks have profound effects on how male and female grow up in a society. However, Isadora's desires to break free the gender stereotypes is visible when she says "I remembered myself travelling abroad with my parents as a teenager and always trying to pretend they weren't with me" (8). Gender stereotypes denote the psychological traits and behaviours that are thought to take place with differential frequency in the two gender groups.

In the 'Afterword' to the novel Jong comments:

Isadora wants love, but how can she recognise love when the madness of sex is blinding her? She is wildly ambitious yet her romantic fantasies are forever getting in her way. She wants to break away from her parents, she wants to find herself - and yet she is driven by family forces she can't fully comprehend. She wants to break free of all restraints but she

keeps getting caught by new versions of the same old traps. She runs away from one man's tyranny only to fall into the tyranny of another... She desperately wants to be a writer but can't sit still. (428)

Jong's Isadora and her reactions and opinions towards the socially conceived notions of female body and its reproductive functions make her a 'subject' who challenges her 'object' position. Jong, like other feminist writers of the 1970s felt their body as a secret that is never discussed. The feeling that those feeling are too private is destroyed when Isadora is described as struggling to learn the anatomy of her body in front of a bathroom mirror, to find out as much of her hidden body. Isadora also questions the high social implication associated with the reproduction function of female body. Isadora is not prepared to conceive after experiencing the sacrifices made by her mother, an artist herself, in order to bring them up.

Isadora tries to prove that a woman's femininity does not depend on motherhood. She believes that a woman can achieve satisfaction even without having children. Having children, to her, should be a choice and not an accidental conception. Jong portrays Isadora in sharp contrast to her sister Randy "taking up pregnancy as it were a new art form she has invented" (205). She even thinks that once her periods stopped because she didn't want to be a woman.

What could be the reason my periods stopped? A mystery. Because I don't want to be a woman. Because it is too confusing. Because Shaw says you can't be an artist and a woman. Having babies uses you up, he says. And I want to be an artist. That's all I ever wanted. (216)

Isadora also deconstructs the passive, docile, submissive definition of female sexuality by narrating her sexual experiences with her first husband Brian Stollerman, her second husband Bennet and her lover Adrian. Isadora's experience with these men provides a glimpse of the society's attitude towards an intelligent woman like her. Her marriage with Brian, the most exciting person turned out to be the greatest disappointment of her life. Isadora gets easily frustrated with domestic housekeeping and pursuing her master thesis, when Brian spends his time at work. In addition, sex gradually vanishes from their relationship leaving Isadora dissatisfied. Isadora finds herself lacking the charm and physical attraction to get the attention of her husband.

Isadora's discovery of the "zipless fuck" and penchant for devising sexual relation with someone's spirit can be considered a transitional method and autonomous way of achieving physical and spiritual satisfaction. She even went on daydreaming and imagining herself having sexual relations with Professor Harrington Stanton. It can be clearly understood that her fantasy derives from her obsession with reading, writing and having imaginary affairs with writers and heroes from the books she read. Brian often finds himself impotent with his wife and Isadora faces problems of marital rape when Brian attempts to prove his manhood. Isadora narrates:

He wanted to show me his power. He wanted to prove he could satisfy me. He hadn't screwed men in about six weeks, but now he wouldn't stop. He fucked me like a machine, refusing to succumb to an orgasm himself but urging me to come again and again and again. After the first three times I

was sore and wanted to stop but he wouldn't. He kept banging away at me like an ax murderer. (276)

Isadora, unlike the conventional representation of woman do not endure this situation. Her relationship with Brian deprived her of a life of her own. She thus abandons him in order to lead a free life. She is bold enough to tell Adrian "I divorced my first husband principally because he was crazy" (116).

Isadora's relationship with her second husband Bennet and her lover Adrian is also problematic due to her lack of resistance and indecision. Jong breaks the socially constructed image of ideal womanhood when she describes Isadora enjoying sex with both male bodies. Isadora's sexual relationship portrays woman's sexual liberation and woman's freedom from the clutches of patriarchal power structures. Breaking the convention of male gaze on female body, Jong represents a female gaze on male body. While comparing the imperfect body of Adrian to the perfect lean body of Bennet, Isadora states, "the best thing about making love with a new man after all those years of marriage was rediscovering a man's body. One's husband's body was practically one's own. Everything about it was known. All the smells and tastes of it, the lines, the hairs, the birthmarks" (122). Besides Adrian has a certain frankness that Bennet lacked. His courage to kiss her in public places and look lasciviously into her eyes and the risk of being with him fascinates Isadora. However, she is abandoned by Adrian and is left alone. Isadora decides to return to Bennet and is determined that whatever happens she will be perfectly fine.

Isadora, the protagonist in *Fear of Flying* articulates female desires, ambitions and a longing for personal liberation with a clear political message. Through Isadora, Erica Jong defied the androcentric writing that used women's bodies in their work only to gratify a male oriented pleasure. Isadora becomes a strong voice against the conventional notions of psychoanalysis on female sexuality. Patriarchal definition of female sexuality as passive is deconstructed by Jong's Isadora and female sexuality as active is reconstructed which challenges the strictly constructed hierarchical relationship between men and women. Jong and Isadora "have been embraced as liberators, corrupters, teachers... have been banned and burned Writing the female body is a mode of resistance for writers like Jong, since it is a male preserve and a tool propagating patriarchy.

Works Cited

- Beasley, Chris. *Gender and Sexuality: Critical Theories, Critical Thinkers*. London: Sage Publications, 2005. Print.
- Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. Trans. H.M Parshley, London: Vintage, 1997. Print.
- Bristow, Joseph. *Sexuality: The New Critical Idiom*. London: Routledge. 1997. Print.
- "Fear of Flying: More Than a Feminist Novel." 123HelpMe.com. Web. 29 Jul 2015 <<http://www.123HelpMe.com/view.asp?id=11000>>.
- Garbacik, Jaimee. *Gender and Sexuality*. USA: For Beginners LLC, 2013. Print.

Jain, Jasbir. *Writing Women Across Cultures*. India: Rawat Publications, 2003. Print.

Jong, Erica. *Fear of Flying*. 1973. New York: Penguin Group, 2003. Print.

Mackinnon, Catherine. "Feminism, Marxism and the State: An Agenda for Theory". *Feminist Social Thought*. Ed. Diana TietjensMayers. New York: Routledge, 1997: 64-91. Print.

Symbolic Expressions of the Modern Psyche in Asimov's *Foundation Series*

Lekshmi R. Nair & T. M. Jacob

It is change, continuing change inevitable change, that is the dominant factor in society today. No sensible decision can be made any longer without taking into account not only the world as it is, but the world as it will be - and naturally this means that there must be an accurate perception of the world as it will be. This, in turn, means that our statesmen, our businessmen, our Everyman, must take on a science fictional way of thinking, whether he likes it or not or even whether he knows it or not. Only so can the deadly problems of today be solved. - (Asimov, Isaac. "My Own View." 5.)

Symbols are pictorial or vocal illustrations of otherwise inarticulate intricate experiences. In a wider sense, symbolism is a fundamental activity of the human mind- the power of actualising inarticulate experience in an apprehensible sensory form. Cassirer sees this symbolising power as the central, typical, universal human faculty at work impartially in myth, religion, language, art and science, creating the human reality by giving it symbolic form. Cassirer's notion of art is that of a heterocosm, another world in the sense that

it is an alternate mode of apprehending the world, one of the organs by which man creates his reality (177-181).

A symbol has a complex meaning. It has additional meanings beyond the literal. Sometimes the most significant of symbols convey an indefinite range of meanings - personal, cultural and universal – thereby transcending the writer’s intended meaning. The more profound the symbol, the greater the complexity of the layers of meaning. Archetypes are universal symbols that occur with the same meaning across individual and cultural boundaries. An archetype used in a work of art has specific meanings. It includes more than symbols – character types, basic plots, scenes and so on also come within its purview. For Frye, an archetype is a symbol, usually an image, which recurs often enough in literature to be recognisable as an element of one’s literary experience as a whole. Essentially archetypes are universally meaningful, non-literal elements in art and culture.

Writers of SF have always been highly inventive and imaginative in the creation of alternate worlds and universes. In many of the sci-fi texts we get an extraordinary range of imaginary societies for comparison. New social structures are tried- new arrangements so far unknown on earth and their flaws and strengths observed. They create a new reality which is a vibrant symbolic representation of the deepest psychological desires and -prejudices of modern man. The central concern in SF remains the effects of science on man. Ben Bova states: “Perhaps this is the ultimate role of science fiction: to act as an -interpreter of science to humanity” (Bova 14). SF is frequently set in the future and hence has often been termed ‘futuristic.’ But SF does not predict the future, except accidentally,

says Sam Lundwall: “It extrapolates, amplifies, it magnifies. It deals with changes, the inventions of a scientific, social or political nature that eventually must change our world whether we like it or not” (Lundwall 11). SF speculates on our reactions to the possible effects of science and technology upon man. This has led to the creation of utopias and dystopias. A utopia is “a good place” which is a thoroughly imaginary world. And a dystopia is a thoroughly bad place projected into the future but predicated on events currently occurring on our place and time. Dystopias of the future seem to be rooted in our present. Dystopian fiction projects a future that is bizarre and vacuous just to reveal a way we should not go.

A frequent symbol in literature, especially in SF is that of the ‘journey’ - a metaphor for the journey of life. The journey through space and its adventures symbolize man’s life and his quest for truth, knowledge, peace and immortality. The image of the spaceship is directly associated with genre SF. The unlimited expanse of the space has licensed the outward reach of the SF writer’s imagination. Robots and hi-tech space crafts may be regarded as images of man’s ambition to wield supreme power over the entire universe, to make himself God. It is a titanic attempt to exalt the stature of man, to put man in a place which religious thought and conventional morality reserves for God. The dark spaces symbolize the unconscious recesses of the human mind over which man has little or no control. The alien creatures and monsters that threaten peaceful existence are sublimations of his unconscious fears and doubts about his place in the scheme of things in this world. Inter-planetary travels and expeditions referred to so often in SF stories symbolize man’s endeavours to unlock the cosmic secrets of matter, space and time.

Asimov's *Foundation Series* explores the concept of the journey as a progression from the unconscious to the conscious and ascribes epic dimensions to it. The journey of mankind is from the unconscious of the self to the collective consciousness of an entire universe. This epic journey of Hari Seldon and the Foundation unfolds itself in seven volumes. The entire course of human history depicted in the *Foundation Series* traces a movement from the chaotic unconsciousness of the First Galactic Empire to the ordered collective consciousness of Galaxia. It is a journey from barbarism to organisation. The humans embark on a voyage that takes them across different worlds and strange cultures. Asimov depicts, in the course of this epic voyage, the rise and fall of imperialism, the flourish of a trading economy emboldened by nuclear power, the emergence of mind control, the search for the home of humanity and the final reprieve in the safety of a unified world, Galaxia. As the story of the Foundation proceeds towards this ineluctable -culmination, Hari Seldon and his psychohistory and the Encyclopedia Galactica recedes into the background. A greater ideal gains prominence and the ensuing events and actions justify this unique quest for an integrated universe. This quest is symbolic of man's search for a place of solace where he could live without fear of being invaded and -dominated by a species from outer space. In all human history no other intelligence has impinged on it. Yet man is always living with this fear of being subjugated by an intelligence that is beyond his comprehension and belief. Despite all the progress that he has made man is obsessed with his safety and his place in the scheme of things in this macrocosm. The uncertainty of his situation makes him search for answers outside his familiar world. His technological brilliance

will not suffice for a deliverance from inter-galactic attack. Asimov paints a frightening picture of the days to come where a divided humanity would be easily susceptible to an attack from another invading intelligence:

An invader that finds us divided against ourselves will dominate us all, or destroy us all. The only true defense is to produce Galaxia, which cannot be turned against itself and which can meet invaders with maximum power. (*Foundation and Earth* 498).

What began as a massive task of rebuilding humanity's future along the lines of a Second Galactic Empire culminated in the choice of Galaxia as the future haven for -mankind. Asimov seemingly suggests that a warring humanity has no chance of survival. Resolution of conflicts and assurance of peace and harmony amongst the beings that share the same planet is vital for the sustenance of the human civilization. The writing of science fiction has often been about the creation of futuristic worlds and alternate universes characterised by unmatched technological brilliance. The usual paraphernalia of SF texts viz., ray-guns, neuronics whips, space cars, androids and cyborgs have a symbolic import as they are authentic depictions of significant psychological traits. Man's primordial urge to fly unbridled in the vast expanses of the sky had culminated in the invention of space crafts and airships. With the travails of conquering time and space -lightened, he had turned his attention to the exploration of unknown lands. The travel -machines and weapons at his disposal had helped him admirably in the fulfilment of this primeval instinct to conquer and subjugate hapless and unsuspecting victims. In his *FS*

Asimov portrays a world nearly two hundred years into the future of mankind, abundantly rich in technological marvels. Space cars, air-taxis, domed cities, hi-tech weapons and inter-planetary travel are very much parts of an evolved life style.

Cyborgs, androids and robots inhabit the futuristic worlds of much of contemporary science fiction. Hybrids of machine and organism, these cybernetic creations are products of imagination and material reality. They have made ambiguous the difference between natural and artificial and are disturbingly lively, potent fusions with dangerous possibilities. In his essay, "Robots: Three Fantasies and One Big Cold Reality," Noel Perrin discusses a third form of superman—the mechanical robot made in man's physical or mental image and hope to accommodate into the real world. He confronts three SF 'fantasies' that form a kind of robotic chain of being, running from sub-to super-alien. The first fantasy is that of Caliban: robots serving as servants of humanity, the second is that of Asimov's robot as Guardian Angel and the third is that of the robot as total environment, a cybernetic being as God, but a benign God, one that grants us immortality and freedom from drudgery (102-112).

Robots have always been pictured as "literal-minded, unemotional, inhuman" machines (*Foundation and Earth* 110). In Asimov's *FS*, the readers are introduced to two android creations, Dors Venabili and Daneel Olivaw who outwit the human characters with their unmatched intellectual alacrity. They are symbolic manifestations of technological brilliance. Their physical appearance is so human-like that none suspects their 'humanity'. Asimov projects these robots as saviours of the human race working uninhibitedly

for its well-being and safety. They are exactly what the humans desire from their robots. To Asimov the robots are a kindly controlling force for a working humanity. In the midst of increasing apprehensions about their subservience to humanity and adherence to the laws of robotics, Asimov presents Dors and Daneel as two powerful yet benevolent cyborgs who ensure the success and continuation of the Seldon Plan and lead the human race to its ultimate choice for safety in an increasingly vulnerable future. Daneel entrusts Dors with the protection of Hari Seldon and protecting Seldon means protecting Psychohistory and the entire human species. She is Hari's consort for twenty-eight years. The unbelievable tales of her strength and speed have earned her the title 'The Tiger Woman.' The only motive of her existence was Seldon's safety. Daneel is a messiah, a godly figure who plots the entire events of the series in his quest for a safe haven for -humanity: "I made my choice as to what the good of humanity must be and I have followed it, as best I could, all this time," says Daneel (*Forward the Foundation* 64). Just before his disappearance, Daneel reveals his motive in no uncertain words, "I have other things in the galaxy to which I must attend . . . and I must Labour for the good of humanity, insofar as I can determine what that might be" (*Forward the Foundation* 119). Asimov vividly explores this guardian-angel fantasy in *I, Robot*. Susan Calvin, the first robopsychologist, talks to a newspaper reporter in the year 2058:

There was a time when humanity faced the universe alone and without a friend. Now he has creatures to help him; stronger creatures than himself, more faithful, more useful, and absolutely devoted to him. (104)

Calvin adds that man need not worry about his future for now we have advanced robots to decide for us. Humans have such limited minds that they do not know what the good of humanity is. The machines know better and they are taking us with them to the future of humanity.

Many later writers seem to share Asimov's vision of benevolent robots serving us, sharing our planet and also running it for our benefit. In his compelling book, *Robot: Mere Machine to Transcendent Mind*, Hans Moravec predicts that by the year 2040, machines will attain human levels of intelligence and that by 2050, they will excel their creators and become conscious beings with emotions slightly different from ours and capable of -reproduction in their own non-biological way. Even though Moravec predicts the end of the domination by human beings, his is not a bleak vision. Far from rallying against a future in which machines rule the world, Moravec embraces it, taking the startling view that intelligent robots will actually be the evolutionary heirs of humans - their mind children, "built in our image and likeness, ourselves in more potent form" (13). Hence Moravec believes that "intelligent machines, which will grow from us, learn our skills, and share our goals and values, can be viewed as children of our minds" (125-26). He uses the term "human equivalence" to classify the next generation robots (100-124). And, Joseph Deken of the National Science Foundation is of the view that they will be "immortal, and far better at doing many tasks than the species that built them" (Deken 235).

Eric Rabkin, in his essay, "Cowboys and Telepaths/ Formulas and Phenomenon," discusses a new kind of homosuperior,

an alien that has naturally arisen through mutation within our gene pool – the telepath- who either lives in isolation or seeks acceptance within the human community (88- 101). Science fiction uses telepath stories to exteriorize the problem of alienation. According to Gary Wolfe, the telepath “is probably the most common image of mutant humans in science fiction” (216). Asimov’s mutant in the *FS*, *The Mule*, is an isolated mutant with near superhuman powers. Feared and Hated by all, he unleashes his telepathic potential over the normal humans and subjugates them to loyal service. For all his superiority over them he has a fundamentally dehumanising weakness. As his name suggests, he is sterile and hence is an outcast. Asimov tells the tale of the conflict between the isolated mutant and the normal humans. The conflict is finally resolved in favour of the homosapiens by the free choice of an individual who ensures the continuance of the Seldon Plan. The episode of the Mule is also an investigation or reevaluation of what it means to be alien or human. The Mule’s struggle is not against the hatred of the normal man. His sense of alienation is so poignant that he has no other option but to fight for his rightful place in society. This gives the episode a wide, resonant appeal. The Mule is a character symbolic of the marginalised and the down-trodden and their struggle for survival. Moreover every individual faces this problem of alienation at one time or the other in his life. It reflects a reality of the human consciousness where “a young, alienated but self-valorized individual struggles against received authority in an attempt to find himself a fit environment” (Rabkin 97).

Dr. Carl Gustav Jung studied deeply the language of the unconscious and made important observations on man’s relation to

his own unconscious. He regarded the unconscious as “the great guide, friend and adviser of the conscious” (Jung viii). The language through which the unconscious communicated with the conscious were symbols and the means of communication were dreams. Thus man’s dreams - his fantasies and nightmares - had a greater symbolic significance as they were expressions of his unconscious intuitions, perceptions, urges and fears. These fantastic symbols in literature are actually primordial archetypal images that bear semblance to the symbolic images embedded in the human psyche. These images of the collective unconscious place a great ethical responsibility on the human mind, the understanding of which leads to wholeness and meaning. They imply significance greater than its obvious and immediate meaning. Jung writes: “a word or an image is symbolic when it implies something more than its obvious and immediate meaning. It has a wider ‘unconscious’ aspect that is never precisely defined or fully explained” (4).

Asimov’s Foundation is a symbolic manifestation of a stable and powerful future world. It is the immediate answer to a fast deteriorating and chaotic Galactic Empire. The Foundation matures into a State with unimaginable military strength fuelled by a powerful trading economy. In today’s world of class wars, arms race and religious intolerance, a state like the Foundation alone can provide security and safety. Even with all its technological supremacy, the Foundation becomes vulnerable to invasions and they are forced to seek out a safe haven for humanity. The final answer lies in Galactica, a universe with shared -consciousness. With the advance of space science Man is conscious of an impending threat from the outer expanses of space. He is forced to find answers to the questions

plaguing his consciousness and these efforts manifest itself in literature. Jung maintained that problems worked out in fantasy could be overcome in real life, as symbolically the subconscious houses life's problems for the most part. All the difficulties that man overcomes in a fantasy are symbolic expressions of psychological difficulties in him, and inasmuch as he overcomes them in his imagination he also overcomes them in his psyche.

Works Cited

- Asimov, Isaac. "My Own View." *Asimov on Science Fiction*. Doubleday, 1981: 5. Print.
- . *Forward the Foundation*. New York: Doubleday, 1993. Print.
- . *Foundation and Earth*. New York: Doubleday, 1986. Print.
- . *I, Robot*. New York: The Gnome Press Inc., 1950. Print.
- Bova, Ben. Ed. *The Analog Science Fact Reader*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1974. Print.
- Cassirer, Ernst. *An Essay on Man. An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture*. Yale: Yale University Press, 1944. Print.
- Deken, Joseph. *Silico Sapiens: The Fundamentals and Future of Robots*. Toronto: Bantam, 1986. 235. Print.
- Frye, Northrop. *Myth and Metaphor: Selected Essays 1974-1988*. Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1994. Print.
- Jung, Carl G., M.-L. von Franz. *Man and his Symbols*. Garden City. New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1964. Print.

- Lundwall, Sam. *Science Fiction: An Illustrated History*. New York: Putnam Publishing Group, 1977. Print.
- Moravec, Hans. *Robot: Mere Machine to Transcendent Mind*. Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. 125-26. Print.
- Perrin, Noel. "Robots: Three Fantasies and One Big Cold Reality." *Aliens: The Anthropology of SF*. Ed. George E. Slusser and Eric S. Rabkin. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987. 102-112. Print.
- Rabkin Eric S. "Cowboys and Telepaths / Formulas and Phenomena." *Aliens: The Anthropology of SF*. Ed. George E. Slusser and Eric S. Rabkin. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987. 88- 101. Print.
- Wolfe, Gary K. *The Known and the Unknown: The Conography of Science Fiction*. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1979. 216. Print.

Self-portrayal: A Thematic and Historic Analysis and its Relevance Today

Joice Sebastian

“Let a man lift himself by himself, let him not degrade himself; for the self alone is the friend of the self and the self alone is the enemy of the self” (The *Bhagavad Gita*, 6:5)

Human nature is other centered from the beginning and always it has a tendency, either to look at them and immitate or to study from their failure. In short People are interested in others and what goes on in their lives, it is not merely an idle curiosity but also as a matter of making their lives better by learning from others' experiences. Narratives acquire a variety of forms depending on choice, circumstances and purpose. One has a story to tell and a way of saying it so that others find it interesting. The earliest writings of the classical age generally followed the epic form in which the autobiographical and subjective mode was nearly completely absent. But as time passed, the tellers of stories begin to foreground themselves in the narratives and thus the autobiographical and spiritual element is highlighted. The elements of the autobiography can be found in some Biblical narratives. We may argue that Socrates' Apology is an autobiography. But it is only occasional, and is not a

complete confessional narrative like that of Saint Augustine's Confessions. "The unexamined life is not worth living." (Socrates). It is in the early stages of the growth of Christianity in the West that this form of writing becomes an established genre of writing. Today it is one of the most popular forms of writing.

'Autobiography' was coined as late as 1809 by Robert Southey, "when he was describing the work of a Portuguese poet, Francisco Vieira; however there is evidence of slightly earlier age, at the end of the eighteenth century, in a review attributed to William Taylor of Isaac D'Israeli's *Miscellanies*." (Anderson, 2001). Autobiographies are considered as a literary genre and it is "a written account of a person written by that person. In other words, it is the story of that a person wrote about themselves. It is derived from the Greek, *autos*, means "self" *bios*, means life and *graphein*, and means "to write." Taking together in this order; the words denote "self life writing" (Wikipedia, 2016). Self life writing is written through the deep meditation and introspection, thus it is a self creation, confession, and self reflexive critical insider within. It provides tremendous scope for self evaluation and brings the readers to the revelation of 'real self', which points towards self actualisation. An autobiography figure us with "models and mirrors that can help us to accept, celebrate, and transform our lives as individuals and as participants in the cyclical drama of incarnation and the dialectical drama of historical evolution" (Shapiro 1968). Narratives acquire a variety of forms depending on choice, circumstances and purpose.

Linda Anderson cites Lejenune's definition of autobiography as "a retrospective prose narrative produced by a real person

concerning his own existence, focusing individual life, particular on the development of his personality.”(Anderson 2001) According to Jean Quigley “As soon as we are asked about ourselves, to tell our autobiography, we start to tell stories. We tell what happened, what we said, what we did” (Quigley 2000). Autobiography in Onely’s views “the explanation for the special appeal of autobiography is a fascination with the self and its profound, its endless mysteries” (Anderson 2001)

From the above statements we can assume that autobiography draws from the life of a writer and like a hidden silver line, each autobiography has a revelation of the ‘real self’, which turned the author to a successful person.

The earliest writings of the classical age generally followed the epic form in which the autobiographical and subjective mode was nearly completely absent. But as time passed, the tellers of stories begin to foreground themselves in the narratives and thus the autobiographical and spiritual element is highlighted. Autobiography is the type of writing which was existed and which has an important place in the literature. In the germinal stages of autobiography, most prominent and celebrated characters penned their inspiring stories to divulge their key of success to the society. As the time pass by, people from all stages of life began to scribe their life experiences of failure, loneliness, revelation and confession in their autobiography. “Autobiography is now one of the most popular and powerful mediums of self expression and all sorts of persons from a president to a pedlar are rushing into print with their lives. It is the fashion; people are crazy about it; they feel impelled to write their ‘lives’.

This craze is symptomatic of man's inner need to unburn his heart, to share his experience with others." (Sinha 1978). In the interim of writing, the autobiographer goes through peripeteia and ultimately reaches to purgation. Writing autobiography is a kind of therapeutic act which gives healing from the past life and hence the autobiographers are free to open up themselves in their writings. Most of the Dalit autobiographies are the paradigm of therapeutic act in autobiography. Bates states "he (the autobiographer) will often be enlarging on special aspects of his life, such as the influences that moulded him...or the services that he rendered to what he most cared about;... a vindication for this world; ... he may ...turn his book into ... a laundry for the dirty linen of his dirty soul" (Bates 1937). Apart from other forms of writings, in autobiography, writers open up themselves before the readers. In Surro's words, "autobiographers give their lives to be understood by others in a dangerously elaborate form. They gather us around them to hear their story confidently out, yet tell it by a means so strikingly formal as to produce in us a critical reserve complicating if not downright destructive of the intimacy they are inviting" (Sturrock 1993)

In today's rapidly changing world, identity crises are more common. Identity can be called as the real self. Today's inadequacy and dearth in values cause from the unawareness of each one's self. Great psychologist Erikson defines identity as: "... a subjective sense as well as an observable quality of personal sameness and continuity, paired with some belief in sameness and continuity of some shared world image. As a quality of unself-conscious living, this can be gloriously obvious in a young person who has found himself as he has found his community. In him we see emerge a unique unification

of what is irreversibly given- that is, body type and temperament, giftedness and vulnerability, infantile models and acquired ideals with the open choices provided in available roles, occupational possibilities, values offered, mentors met, friendships made, and first sexual encounters.” (Erikson 1970)

People tend to experience identity crises from various points throughout life, particularly at point of change in the life such as stepping to a new job, at the dawn of relation, blessed event of a child birth etc. We are successful when we explore ourselves in the areas of life. Tragedy becomes ineluctable when we are unable to extricate ourselves from the conflict between whom we are and who we are supposed to be. Conversely, awareness of the true self is essential to the eventual achievement of self- actualization. The gist of all autobiography is the story of a person’s life where he/she successfully finds the real self or the self acceptance of failure to achieve self actualisation.

Every reality on earth is like a rose, which bears flowers and thorns in the same plant. People love and appreciate the plant for the beautiful flower and criticise for the thorns. At the same time the plant in its totality is good and appreciable. Same as autobiography is also appreciated in its strengths and criticised in its weaker side. There is a question of truth in autobiography. According to James Olney, autobiography cannot be truthful and pure because the artistic element is given more prominence than the historical elements. Because the author thinks how to place himself in the writing and how it can make presentable before the reader, rather than how to present truth about himself. Humans have a tendency to describe positive impressions of themselves and present opinions as facts.

They may not describe history as history but it can be viewed through their convictions and life situations. Most of the incidents created in autobiography are recreated by the author. To cater to the needs of the reader, events are recreated and modified far from reality. Saksen states it “Autobiographies, however, written late in life may often mix up fancy with fact unless they are based on carefully preserved memoranda. Even then it may be difficult to recall thoughts and feelings as they were at the time. This has therefore, led to the interesting controversy as to what is the best are at which an autobiography should be written.”(Saksen.S 1949) Roger Porter and H.R. Wolf quotes “ Truth is a highly subjective matter, and no autobiographer can represent exactly ‘what happened back then,’ any more than a historian can definitively describe the real truth of the past”(Porter and Wolf 1973)

For the autobiographer, all his narrations are true. It may not be truth according to history and other objective evidences. “Autobiography’s designation as fiction however does not imply that it has no validity as truth. For contemporary writers on autobiography, the autobiographical enterprise continuous to be a quest for the truth of the self but that truth is more in the nature of a subjective or ‘personal truth’ rather than objective truth” (Hunt 2000) In short autobiographies are truthful in its subjective manner.

Autobiography is an account of the things that happened in a person’s life which are selected and made ready for the public reflection. Author’s general philosophy, religious faith, or political and cultural attitude shapes his self. Thus the writings are influenced by the author’s real self. According to Sidonie Smith and Julia

Watson in their book “ Reading Autobiography : A guide for interpreting Life Narratives” (2001), suggests that all autobiographies are pinpointed certain six elements such as : Memory (trauma, history space), Experience (Interior and exterior experiences), Identity (as difference, intersectional), Temporal and spatial (as past, present place, social spaces memory etc.), Agency (leaning of the particular interest), Embodiment (memory, subjectivity and materiality of body; pain, illness, gay lesbian etc.). Usually the author thinks about how to place his ‘self’ and how to present it before the reader in an acceptable manner. Writing self is not that easy deliberately because the writer has to pick out incidents prudently and consciously. Formally the autobiographical contrast affirmed “The identity” between the names of the author, narrator and protagonist. Autobiography is usually written in the first person and is consequent because they allow people in similar circumstances to realize that they are not alone. They can inspire the readers to face the realities of life, to be creative in solving problems, to find real self.

For instance, Julian of Norwich’s *Revelations of Divine Love* was written in the background of Black Death in the city of Norwich. It is estimated that the plague killed about one third of England’s population in a single epidemic. Thus the whole country was in trouble. Julian was stroked by these images and wrote this book. Later it is stated that So many people were strengthened and uplifted by this writing. The crowd lost faith in God by facing such a tragedy in life but Julian’s words gave them hope in God and life. Through this book she invites people to understand the love of God and the plan of God which turns everything for the good of his

people. Julian quotes “And I saw full surely that ere God made us he loved us; which love was never lacking nor ever shall be. And in this love he has made all his works; and in his love he had made all things profitable to us; and in this love our life is everlasting... in which love we have our beginning. And all this shall we see in God, without end” (Norwich 1901) Autobiographies are in fact important part of history and every writer is influenced by his culture, religion and time. It is true as Morgan notes “In a given autobiographical moment, a narrative speaks a subject into a position within a moral order, and simultaneously arranges historical events as a moment towards a moral endpoint” (Morgan 2002).

The self of the author is portrayed and his self is put forth as an epitome of the society. A person writing his/her autobiography has been participant observer of his/her own life and all events, social and family ties, and the connections so evident to all those happenings. Author's self can't exist without connecting to the community. Whatever the author face is the problem of the society. “The specific inwardness of autobiography makes of it an attractive source for historians, and all the more so now that they are concerned with cultural history and with such inchoate topics as the history of ‘privacy’. Autobiographers inevitably record details of contemporary life that are too small and too ordinary to have been found worth recording in any official source, as well as recording their own reactions and attitudes towards all manner of events.” (Sturrock, J 1993) The events in the novel and the conversations reflect the culture, religion and the attitude of the author towards all these ideas. In James Joyce's *A Portrait of the artist as a young Man*, for the sake of art, the protagonist Stephen, deeply desires to get rid of

the culture and religion. At the same time he is becoming a voice for the community. “Stephen’s ultimate goal is to give a voice to the very community that he is living. In the last lines of the novel, Stephen expresses his desire to “forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race” (Spark notes).

Autobiography is a genre developed its full potential only when Western man acquired a thoroughly historical understanding of existence. “Autobiography assumes a significant cultural function around A.D 1800. The growing significance of autobiography is thus a part of that great intellectual revolution marked by the emergence of the particular modern form of historical mindedness we call historicism or historicism” (Weintraub 1975)

Autobiographical writings have shorter types like diary, journals and letters. According to the Oxford dictionary, diary is a book in which one keeps a daily record of events and experiences. It’s the record the daily events of a person’s life and “ catch the calms and tempests of a life, to see the stories it tells as they develop or disappear, to see the patterns and images it evokes and sometimes repeats...” (Gillikin 1985)

Journals are daily written records of personal experiences and observances, usually not very emotional. Journals are a good source of primary information. They are published on regular basis. Autobiographer tries to review events but the journal writer presents it. Thus the journal writer is closer to the present. Georges Gusdorf’s “Conditions and Limitations of autobiography” differentiates autobiography and journal as he states: The author of a journal,

nothing his impressions and mental states from day today, fixes the portrait of his daily reality without any concern for continuity. Autobiography, on the other hand requires a man to take a distance with regard to him in order to reconstitute himself in the focus of his special unity and identity across time (35).

Letters are written messages addressed to a specific person or organisation. It is the communication between two. “In *The Silent Woman* Janet Malcolm says: Letters are the great fixative of experience. Time erodes feeling. Time creates indifference. Letters prove to us that we once cared. They are the fossils of feeling.”(Gillies 2009)

“A diary is a record with discrete entries arranged by date reporting on what has happened over the course of a day or other period. A personal diary may include person’s experiences, and or thoughts or feelings,, including comments on current events outside the writers direct experience.” (Diary 2016) Anne Frank’s “The Diary of a Young Girl” is the best example of diary.

We have by now come in touch with the steady growth of the autobiographical writings and the variety of autobiography, where people speak for themselves in divergent ways. Through the history of autobiography and from the life stories of people, we can reach to a conclusion that each person has a real self within and when the person realises it and actualises it he/ she experiences the real satisfaction in life. For instance St. Augustine’s *Confessions* , James Joyce’s *Portrait of the Artist as a Young man* and many other life stories speaks of the victory of the writers through actualising their real self. At present autobiography has an admirable place in

the world of literature because People are interested in reading autobiography because “autobiography is a form of witnessing which matters to others” (Anderson 2001).

Works Cited

Anderson, L. *Autobiography*. 29 West 35 Street, Newyork: Taylor and Francis Group,2001. Print.

Anderson,L.*Autobiography: New Critical Idiom*. London: Routledge,2001. Print.

Anomalyka. *Sublime in Authenticity- How Critical is Truth in Autobiography* (2012, march18.) retrived from <http://www.studentpluse.com/article/31>, accessed 29 September 2016, Web.

Autobiography. (2016, September 29). In Wikipedia, The free Encyclopaedia. Retrieved 04:01, October 5, 2016, from [https:// en. Wikipedia. Org/ w/ index.php? Title= Autobiography & oldid= 7417177615](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?Title=Autobiography&oldid=7417177615), Web.

Bates, E.*Inside out: An Introduction to Autobiography*. Newyork: Sheridan House, 1934. Print.

Diary. (2016, September 29). In Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopaedia. Retrieved 0:09, October, 2016 from [https:// en. Wikipedia.org/w/ index.php? Title= Diary& oldid= 741755454](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?Title=Diary&oldid=741755454), Web.

Erikson, E.H. Reflections on the Dissent of Contemporary Youth. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 51, 11-12,1970. Print.

- Freeman, M. *Charting the Narrative Unconscious: Cultural Memory and the Challenge of Autobiography*. *Narrative Inquiry*, 12(1) 193-211, 2002. Print.
- Hunt, C. *Therapeutic Dimensions of Autobiography Creative Writing*: London. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2000.
- Olney, J. *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical*. Princeton : Princeton University Press, 1980. Print.
- Porter, R. J. *The Voice Within: Reading and Writing Autobiography*. New York : Alfred A. Knopf, 1973. Print.
- Quigley, J. *The Grammar of Autobiography: A Developmental Account*. Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associated, 2000. Print.
- Saksen, S. *Indian Autobiographies*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1949. print.
- Sharpiro, Stephen A. "The Dark Continent of Literature: Autobiography." *Comparative literature* 5, 421-424, 1968. Print.
- Sim, Surat. "Spiritual Autobiography" . *The Literary Encyclopedia*. (2001, jan. 1), retrived from [http:// www.litencyc.com](http://www.litencyc.com), accessed 29 september 2016. Web.
- Sinha, R. *The Indian Autobiographies in English*. New Delhi: S. Chand & Company Ltd, 1978 .Print.
- Sinha, R. *The Indian Autobiographies in English*. Ram Nagar New Delhi: S. Chand & Company Ltd, 1978. Print.

Smith, S., & Watson, J. *Reading Autobiography a Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*. London: University of Minnesota Press, 2001. Print.

Spark Notes Editors. (n. d.). Spark Note on A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. Retrieved October 5, 2016, from <http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/portraitartist/>. Web.

Sturrok, J. *The Language of Autobiography*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993. Print.

Weintraub, K. *Autobiography and Historical Consciousness*. *Critical Inquiry*, 1(4) 821- 848. Retrieved from [http:// www.Jstor.org/stable1342851](http://www.Jstor.org/stable1342851), 1975. Web.

Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopaedia. (2004, July 22). FL: Wikimedia Foundation, Inc. Retrived August 29, 2016 from [http:// www.Wikipedia.Torg](http://www.Wikipedia.Torg). Web.

**Persistence of Narratives: The Armenian
Episode in William Dalrymple's
*From the Holy Mountain: A Journey in the
Shadow of Byzantium***

Suma Alexander

In the introduction to *The New Granta Book of Travel*, the British travel writer, essayist and novelist Jonathan Raban tells of the sustained interest in travel narratives that take us for long journeys through a mobile and disjunctive world. In his words, “They explore the defiant survival and resurgence of belief in magic and religion, the fate of people crushed in the collision between one culture and another, the lives of civilians in countries that have been torn apart in our new wars”(xv). All these ingredients form the core of the travel narratives of William Dalrymple, the Scottish born historian and travel writer. His travel texts, *In Xanadu: A Quest* (1989), *City of Djinn: A Year in Delhi* (1993), *From the Holy Mountain: A Journey in the Shadow of Byzantium* (1997), *The Age of Kali: Indian Travels and Encounters* (1998), *Nine Lives: In Search of the Sacred in Modern India* (2009) bear excellent testimony to his skill both as a historian and a travel writer.

From the Holy Mountain is a text that has incorporated diverse elements in its composition. The work adopts the diary format popularized by Robert Byron in *Road to Oxiana*. Asa

delineation of the history of Middle East Christians, the work follows the conventions of historical data collection, analysis and explanation. The central theme is issue-based and hence it follows the conventions of investigative journalism and reportage. In the footsteps-genre of travel writing, Dalrymple retraces the footsteps of an earlier traveller on the same route to record the present predicament of the surviving Christians in the region. The overall tone of the narrative is serious as it captures an episode of an impending tragedy, the disappearance of Christianity in its birthplace. Dalrymple's recourse to the bizarre tales of the earlier text is meant to provide some light moments to the reader, though he privileges the work as a record of Eastern monasticism of the sixth century.

Dalrymple's recording of the words of the local Christian population to locate the contemporary politics of the region has the redeeming effect of promoting a history of the people, as opposed to a history from above. At the same time, he also gets in touch with eminent historians like Stephen Runciman to authenticate his readings. The initial subtitle of the work, *A Journey in the Shadow of Byzantium* points to a broad outlook which takes into account the many aspects of the Byzantine period in relation to the present. The subtitle that was given later, *A Journey among the Christians of the Middle East*, limits the scope to the predicament of the Christians in the region. It also points to the journalistic style adopted by the writer to convey the message.

A travel writer with a deep interest in history, art, religion and culture, Dalrymple has painted the complex textures of Christianity in the Middle East in the work, with particular emphasis to the

experiences and predicaments of the lesser known Christians who reside therein, bringing alive a history that matters tremendously but is often ignored. Towards the end of the sixth century John Moschos(A.D 550-619), a Byzantine monk and his pupil, Sophronius, the Sophist had undertaken a travel across the Levant, visiting monasteries and churches, and collecting the wisdom of the desert fathers, that lasted for nearly thirty years. In an attempt to replicate the trail marked by Moschos in *The Spiritual Meadow*, Dalrymple starts his journey from the holy Mount Athos in Greece and traverses across Istanbul (old Constantinople), East Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Egypt. Moschos visited the Middle East during a time when the different Christian sects like the Nestorians, Copts, Armenians, Surianis etc. co-existed in the birth place of Christianity, which is quite different from the present state of affairs when these glorious Christian communities are in the brink of extinction. E.H.Carr's positivism about history as an unending dialogue between the present and the past holds true for Dalrymple as a writer. He laments the dwindling of religious tolerance in the lands where Islam and Christianity had peacefully co-existed. Dalrymple's perceptive vision makes him comment that Moschos and Sophronius were witnessing the first act during their travels whose denouement was taking place in the present (453).

Prophet Mohammed who was born in AD 570 and was a contemporary of Moschos was inspired by the elements of the higher civilizations of Christianity and Judaism during his initiation into religious experience. During this time, the Arabs followed a pagan system of worshipping the manifold forces of nature through the medium of idols. Quite contrary to this practice, the Prophet

advocated an uncompromisingly monotheistic form of worship. But he gradually came to denounce Jewish rituals and Christian doctrines. The revelation of God in person was termed as Islam, the resignation to the will of God (Kirk 12). But Islam remained tolerant of other religions unlike the present condition in the Middle East. Dalrymple sees the Eastern Christians as the connecting link between Islam and Western Christianity. He seeks the reasons for the degradation of Christianity in the Levant and comes to the conclusion that issues are different from region to region. He observes that Christianity had to face consistent hostility from Islamic fundamentalism only in Egypt.

As a historian, Dalrymple has always celebrated border crossings and cultural confluence in his works. He portrays the grandeur of Constantinople; the capital of Christendom that hosted seventy two different languages was a place where Coptic monks, Jewish glass blowers, Persian silk traders and Armenian architects found their safe haven. This multi cultural tradition continued even after its fall to the Turks in 1453 (27). Dalrymple's narrative discourses have arguments embedded in them in the form of commentaries that direct the readers along the desired sense. He traces the gradual erosion of the tradition of religious and ethnic tolerance to the tidal wave of nineteenth century nationalism that brought down the Ottoman Turks who were mostly Christian or Jewish converts and led to the rise of a mono-ethnic Turkish identity. Dalrymple's Armenian narrative begins here. The end result was the migration of Jews to Israel, the Greeks to Athens, the Armenians to Armenia and the United States (28).

The case of the Armenians in Turkey is devoted considerable space and attention in Dalrymple's narrative. He details on how the Armenians have dwindled to negligible numbers in the Anatolian Christian towns of Edessa and Diyarbakir where they had once flourished. The episode of Armenian genocide following the First World War has left its bloody reputation in these cities. By genocide is meant the act of destroying in part or whole, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group. Raphael Lemkin, the Polish Jewish legal scholar coined the word in 1943 to refer to the atrocities against Armenians in 1915 during the First World War; as well as the Nazi massacre of the Jews in the 1940s during the Second World War. In the context of the Polish invasion of 1939, mark Hitler's words: "Who today after all, speaks of the annihilation of the Armenians?"(ArmenianGenocideCurriculum.doc). He only meant that the erasure of such episodes from memory would only be a matter of time.

Narratives can be employed to voice the conflicting claims of collectivities as well as to assert the individual position in relation to the world. Nancy Partner observes that narrative has become the key mode of explanation for every area of Mideast. She employs the words of a Princeton expert, Michael Doran, "In the Middle East, as in the Balkans and Ireland, suppressed religious and ethnic groups have a kind of film playing in their minds of their own oppression. . . In moments of political disruption they are ready to add another scene to the pre-existing narrative." (96). Dalrymple details on how individual stories contribute to the collective memory of a race. Diyarbakir had one of the largest Armenian communities in Anatolia, which flourished in business. In 1895, at the start of the

Armenian massacres, 2500 Armenians were stabbed to death. Dalrymple quotes an English clergyman, the Rev. W. A. Wigram who visited the town in 1913 and reported seeing the doors splintered and patched and had warned that further massacres would follow. This turned true when only two years later, during the First World War the sadistic Ottoman Governor of Diyarbakir, Dr Resid Bey, was responsible for some of the very worst atrocities against Christians- both Armenian and Syrian Orthodox- to take place anywhere in the entire Ottoman Empire: men had horse shoes nailed to their feet; women were gang- raped (81).

Dalrymple notes that an old Armenian cathedral which became a fire station after 1915 was at the time of his visit being converted to a mosque(78). The Turkish Armenian heritage seemed to be rapidly disappearing. Dalrymple quotes another incident when during his initial visit to Diyarbakir a year ago; he had noticed an unusual graveyard that bore solid evidence of peaceful religious co-existence in times past. There were Ottoman, Turkish, Armenian and Greek tomb milestone inscriptions that marked the religious tolerance of the bygone days. But the following year he noticed that all the Armenian stones had disappeared. All these, he infers, are visible signs of the deliberate attempt to erase the Armenian presence by the Turkish government. The rich architectural marvels contained in the heritage of Armenian churches, monasteries, ecclesiastical buildings were let to crumble and deteriorate in course of time. To recover Armenian history or to work on Armenian archeological sites was considered taboo, as Dalrymple cites the case of the French historian J.M. Thierry who was arrested and interrogated in this regard in 1975 (85). A mere mention of the Armenian heritage

included the Turkish edition of *Encyclopedia Britannica* among the list of forbidden books in Turkey, and its editor was charged with distorting the facts on a politically sensitive issue (86).

The social and political programmes behind the promotion of the Armenian truth or the Turkish truth deserve mention. The censorship for publishing Armenian truths was stepped up on account of the formation of the Armenian Secret Army for the liberation of Armenia that mainly targeted Turkish diplomats. The Turkish government argued that the propaganda of Armenian genocide was an exaggerated version. They admitted that many Armenians may have lost their lives during the tumultuous episode of the First World War, but same was the case with the Turks who also were killed in its train (86-87).

The Armenians commemorated the hundredth anniversary of the Armenian genocide on 24 April 2015. Turkey's national narrative terms the massacre as a "tragedy", not worthy to be termed genocide. They condemned the "one-sided narrative" of Pope Francis who described the Armenian killings as the first genocide of the last century. Turkey argues that 3 lakh to 5 lakh Armenians and an equal number of Turks had lost their lives in a civil strife when the Armenians rose up against the Ottoman rulers and backing their Russian enemies (The Hindu, April 13, 2015). The actual toll of Armenian lives is estimated to be more than a million by genocide scholars. The US, the UK and Israel use different terminologies to describe the events (*BBC.com Q&A Armenian Genocide*). On the other side more than 20 countries including France, Russia, Canada and Italy formally recognized and condemned the genocide

supporting the cause of the Armenians. Barack Obama seeks to avoid ill feelings with Turkey that is deemed a valuable NATO ally in its fight against the Islamic State militants. Obama uses the euphemism *Meds Yeghern*, the Armenian term meaning “great calamity”, deliberately avoiding the term genocide (armenianweekly.com). Britain also maintains a diplomatic stand by condemning the atrocities but not using the term genocide on the basis that it is not legally proven.

Armenians are one of the most dispersed peoples of the world. There is a serious debate on this issue and many historians both in Turkey and the West have questioned the appropriateness of using the term genocide. They hold the view that owing to security reasons a large mass of Armenians were relocated from Anatolia to Syria who perished en route in the desert due to starvation. Dalrymple quotes Armenian scholars who are alarmed by campaigns aimed at the erasure of Armenian presence in Anatolia, most probably appropriating the Armenian narrative into a historical myth in future (88). The matter of Armenian genocide remains a disputed episode even after the lapse of a hundred years.

As Nancy Partner observes: “Every piece of disputed territory marked by political conflict is also mapped with overlapping and conflicting narratives with different collective protagonists embarked on their different quests of heroic fulfillment or sanctified (and endlessly repeated) victimhood”(92). The Armenian victimhood of 1915 was duly acknowledged when the Armenian Apostolic Church declared the 15 lakh victims as saints. These are instances when history gets charged with the emotions of veneration and

victimhood instead of being a rationally provisional explanation of events (96). Dalrymple reminds the readers that it is the need of the hour that the Eastern Christians should survive in the birthplace of the religion to preserve the historical bond between the two contending claims of Islam and Christianity in the present times.

Works Cited

“Armenian Killings the First Genocide of the Last Century: Pope.”

The Hindu 13 April 2015: 12. Print.

Dalrymple, William. *From the Holy Mountain: A Journey in the Shadow of Byzantium*. London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1997. Print.

Kirk, George E. *A Short History of the Middle East: From the Rise of Islam to Modern Times*. Washington DC: Public Affairs Press, 1949. Print.

Oxford Encyclopedia of Human Rights. “Armenians in the Ottoman Empire.” London: OUP, 2009. Print. Armenian GenocideCurriculum.doc. Web. 9 Oct. 2016. <<http://the.doddcenter.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/>>.

Partner, Nancy. “Narrative Persistence: The Post-Postmodern Life of Narrative Theory.” *Re-Figuring Hayden White*. Ed. Frank Ankersmit, Ewa Domanska, and Hans Kellner. California: Stanford UP, 2009. Print.

Raban, Jonathan. Introduction. *The New Granta Book of Travel*. Ed. Liz Jobey. London: Granta Books, 2011. Print.

“Q&A: Armenian genocide dispute.” *www.BBC.com*. n. pag. 2 June 2016. Web. 9 Oct. 2016.

**Deconstructing Master Narratives: Gogu
Shyamala's *Father may be an Elephant and
Mother only a Small Basket; But... as :*
A Marking Shift within the Genre of
Dalit Writing.**

Preethy Eapen

Dalit Literature is a heterogeneous, multifaceted term which includes the writings of the marginalized, oppressed, subaltern and downtrodden groups that are written with an inherent Dalit consciousness. In “Father May be an Elephant and Mother only a Small Basket; But...” Gogu Shyamala, prominent Dalit activist and writer presents the life of the Madiga community which is deemed as the most exploited class among the Dalits. Shyamala marks an interesting shift within the genre of Dalit writing by making violence, grief and sufferings of the Dalits as a subtext. This collection of stories, translated from Telugu is a deconstruction on master narratives of Dalit writing which only talk about the sufferings of the community especially its women.

Dalit Literature is a ‘literature of commitment’, which artistically portrays sorrows, slavery and tribulations endured by Dalits there by exposing the evil of caste system and the injustice

done to them by upper class. The Dalit Writers write what they see and experience. It is in a way a lofty image of grief. “Dalit Literature is the literature that captures the desire, dreams, belief, agony, suffering, violence, humiliation, impatience, dissatisfaction, rage and resistance of Dalits” (B.M Puttaiah). Here living realities, the conditions that are eating up living people, are the focus. Their life gains precedence over literary issues. It is the story of wounds, wounds which contain a song of pain. Dalit Literature is not the literature of those whose stomachs are full.

The roots of the term Dalit can be traced back to Purusuktha of Rig Veda where we find the first reference of caste system. According to the Hymn:

Brahmnoasaya mukhamasit

Bahu rajanayah kruta

Uru Tadasay Yadvaishya

Padabhayam Sudro ajayat(x90-12)

Brahmins were originated from the face of Brahma, the Kshatriyas from his shoulders, and the Vaisayas from his thighs and Sudras from his feet. Hence Brahmins are the most superior and Sudras are the most inferior in the hierarchy. So Brahmins establish the theories that caste system is god made and not manmade. Sudras are considered out-castes, downtrodden, polluted marginals and are exploited by the higher caste since centuries. It is from this age old silencing they transform their tears into collective social voice. Dalit writers with their visionary outlook and inspired writing toppled the myth of divine origin to enforce the socio cultural boom for the total emancipation of Dalits.

Gogu Shyamala, a highly respected Dalit Feminist and senior fellow at the Anveshi Research Centre for Women's Studies in Hyderabad paints a Dalit World in rural Andhra Pradesh in the collection "Father may be an Elephant and Mother only a Small Basket, But..." In the world of her stories human lives are not separate from nature even in the onslaught of Globalization, Privatisation, Liberalisation, Modernisation and Urbanization. The stories translated from Telugu have something autobiographical about them. Shyamala depicts the "Lived Experiences" of Dalit men and women but at the same time she marks an interesting shift within the genre of Dalit Writing by portraying the unseen brighter side of Dalit life. Beyond the trials, tribulations, tears, sorrows, sweat, supplications, marginalization and oppression of Dalits we see life in its full vigour and glory in Shyamala's stories. Her stories are a celebration of difference. Shyamala expresses her experiences in the most realistic way by the conscious use of a variety of Telugu used by Dalits. Her dialect as well as images comes from her experiences instead from observation of nature. Her experiences (anubhava) take precedence over speculation (anumana). In her open ended realistic and experimental little stories she captured the sweet and rich odour of Mala-Madiga communities, whose life is in bonding with nature. In Shyamala's short stories we hear many untouchable voices challenging the dominant social, economic, political, cultural, and epistemological structures, and questioning the traditional mechanisms of oppression.

There is a general traditional assumption in the society that the Dalits did not have their own cultural institutions, arts and fine arts, etc. The reality is Dalits do have their own culture and have

had their own traditions, music, rites of passage, worship of gods, and knowledge of many kinds of fine arts, handicrafts and so on. Many stories or books on them by well-meaning authors did not mention this cultural side of their miserable lives, and focused on only the oppression and abuse perpetrated upon them by the upper caste Hindus, and so we had not heard of their cultural traditions. Here Shyamala stands out. Shyamala's "stories are a treasure-house of knowledge skills, music and aesthetics of Dalit life that are invisible to the rest of society". Her stories "provide a window for us to peep in, to grasp, to understand, to digest and to sort out they leave us in awe, amazement, happiness and pain—all at once" (K.Lalita). Song and work co exist in Shyamala's stories. Music is an intrinsic part of Dalit life in stories Shyamala painted.

In the caste-based Indian society, there is a general belief that upper-caste women, despite being women, are more advantaged than lower-caste men and the condition of lower-caste women are worse because apart from caste-discriminations, they are the victims of gender discrimination in the domestic as well as social spheres. A Dalit woman is triply marginalized by the conjoined operations of caste, class and gender. Shyamala turns this belief upside down in her collection. Upper caste woman are portrayed as subalterns, who are not permitted to express their emotions, feelings and not even tears. It is not the Dalits but Brahmin women are marginalized and their tears go unseen and sorrows remain unheard and their unseen tears are thicker than blood. They are forced to wear a false mask of contentment and joy. Amidst the catastrophe they need to remain in a tranquil state of mind doing padapojas of their husbands and they should remain as pativretas even when their husbands go

after another. This double standard is worse in Aryans than in Dalits. We can't reiterate that Dalit women are the marginalized of the marginalized.

Dalit women suffer two distinct patriarchal structures: The Brahmin form of patriarchy which stigmatize the Dalit women due to their caste identity of being untouchable and the patriarchy within their own families. Dalit men are reproducing the same mechanism against their women which the upper caste men used to dominate them. But the striking difference between the Dalit and Brahmin patriarchy is that the former is more democratic. In a way, Dalit women face 'weaker forms' and hence they live in a more egalitarian family structure. Dalit women have the right to abuse their husbands and hit him back when tortured. She is ready to fight both physical and mental oppression in her family as well as from the society. She vehemently opposes the ideology of 'Husband Worship'. Bonding between the in-laws is stronger in the Dalit community. Mothers have no hesitation in cursing their sons for their rude behavior and ill treatment of their wives. Sangavva in 'Father may be an Elephant and Mother only a Small Basket, But' curses her son in public when he beats his wife:

Not even three days since you came back and you have started beating her up, you asshole. You have fallen like Yama on her.! How much will you beat her? Look at the injuries all over her body. You have made her helpless! How do you think she will work? If you have the balls, go show this anger to the people who called you a thief. When left us to wander around the country, she looked after your children and me. Anyone else would have

left us to our fate. She starved her own stomach to fill ours. She kept all those who cast their eyes on her at a distance and looked after this house, you jackass...

All the women gathered there started scolding him which is unimaginable in the Brahmin community where patriarchy reigns in its full glory: “Is this what you learnt in town to beat your wife? All this while her eyes were sore, waiting for you to comeback. and this is what she gets from you” . Sangavva has no regrets in saying “I gave birth to a good for nothing fellow”. The harsh reality of bonded labourers is also depicted in this short story. The narrator's elder sister had given birth prematurely in the fields. Woman in the fields helped her and cut the umbilical cord with a sickle! For her, maternity leave is not an option. Her battered mother, who could barely walk is forced to take care of the new born and its mother. For this reason, Gogu Shyamala comes up with the saying: “Did the elders say in vain that an elephant-like father may go, but the small basket-like mother should stay”. No one knows a child better than her own mother. Dalit women are strong enough to face whatever life throws at them. Men are painted as alcoholic and lazy. Women are capable of managing their family even in the absence of their husbands. They even partake in the hard labour along with their men to support their lives.

The Women in the Madiga household are portrayed as tough, opinionated, courageous and rebellious. In the story ‘But Why shouldn't the Bandila Woman Ask for Her Land’ the Erpula woman Shyamama proves that subalterns can speak. The Dora's mouth dried up and fell silent in shock when Shyamama, the Baidla

woman bangs her fist on the table and demands her land. The Dora's eyes popped out and mouth fell open. The women are not ready to internalize sufferings and tribulation. Their voices are no longer muted and kept in silence. They have the guts to articulate their voice. Women are ready to react against their plight by fighting against all unjust divisions in the society. In 'Raw Wound', which is the most powerful and autobiographical narration in the collection, Shyamama is sent away to school in order to save her from becoming a Jogini. Even though the tag 'Jogini' may sound respectable, her parents smuggle her away to school in order to save from being the sexual property of the whole village, and they are ready to face the consequences too.

The father-figure in 'Raw Wound', contrasts with the one sketched out in 'Father may be an Elephant and Mother only a Small Basket'. In the latter, father is the villain who beats his wife up for not giving him money. Shyamama's parents ensure that their daughter does not suffer the ill fate. Her father leaves her at the school. He begs the hostel warden to keep his daughter safe. Balappa disobeyed the village order with the support of his stubborn wife. They wanted to make sure that their daughter gets proper education at any cost. They very well knew that emancipation comes only through good education. For these deeds, Balappa was beaten up really bad by the land lords. The land ladies denied him even a single drop of water. Finally a little compassion comes from the mala women Kashamma, who squeezed milk from her breast to the unconscious Balappa. They are not ready to internalize the decisions imposed on them by their landlords. They are not ready

to accept Patel's decision. They have no hesitation in leaving their house, land and village only to get their daughter educated.

Dalit women are no longer subalterns; they are grabbing opportunities to create an independent space for them, to articulate their unheard voices and their suppressed tears. They no longer believe in the hegemony of caste, class and gender which conditions them and forces them to believe in the dominant values. She no longer needs the support of man to protect her. Balamma in 'Tataki Wins Again' demonstrates extraordinary tenacity and courage in challenging the masculine and caste hierarchies in rural India. She is not ready to showcase herself as a helpless victim of sexual exploitation. She does not want to project her body as the site of enactment of masculine and caste power. Like Phoolan Devi she changed her poverty, ignorance and oppression to protest anger and aggression.

Balamma, an eleven year old Dalit girl goes to irrigate her land before dawn, and this makes the neighboring landlord angry as he could not get water for his own land. She has no regrets in arguing with Karnam's bonded labourer: "Move, old man!" She elbowed him and he fell on to the bund. "I have to more plots to water, they'll fill in no time," she said as she returned to her field. "Don't you dare come near till then. You can divert the flow of water after I'm done". The boys Narsadu and Yelladu make excuses for not jumping into the lake to save the drowning rabbit, but Balamma dives into the deep water and gets to the drowning bunny in no time. Dora says: Tataki! You bloody witch! You are a small girl, are you? What makes you come here like a man and water the groundnut fields? In our

houses, girls like you don't step into the field. You mala and Madiga don't even know that girls have to be kept at home!

When Dora tries to molest her, Balamma kicks him between the legs and escapes. This makes Dora a laughing stock even among the Madiga women. "They giggled through their sari ends as they shared the news, "The landlord wanted to catch our Balamani. She kicked him in the groin!"

In 'Tataki Wins Again', Shyamala turns upside down the notion that Dalit women are always molested and harassed. She is capable of protecting herself with her inner strength. For her strength comes from within. She is not hoping and waiting for support from her family, society or of the laws of the country. She knows what is right and what is wrong, how to behave and how to respond amidst calamities and exploitation. Shyamala's rejection of class, caste and gender reaches its apex in this story. Dalits are no longer the victims of social, economic and cultural inequality. No one can enslave them forever and ever. Their poverty ignorance, oppression and ultimate alienation results in protest, anger aggression and discord. She is the 'New Woman'.

We see how the Dalit women project their anger and sufferings hidden in their hearts, on the stage in 'Jambava's Lineage'. They consider art as a medium to eradicate their grief and sufferings and as a fitting reply to all those who walk over their heads. Elamma says "On stage I'd bring out all the anger and suffering hidden in my heart. I'd indirectly abuse some of the men sitting in the audience as if I was referring to Mayala fakir or Srihari. I'd stop only when they

shrunk in shame” Bhagam performance is a fitting reply to the community which live like parasites and exercise power over Dalits.

In stories like ‘A Beauteous Light’, Shyamala paints a much brighter picture of the Dalit life, even brighter than that of the so-called upper castes. Family bonding is stronger in the Dalit community. The Brahmins have no hesitation in tagging their own boy Sharma as polluted and to kick him out of their community for loving Elamma, a Madiga woman. The Madigas are ready to accommodate him. Dalit women are portrayed as more expressive and they stand up for their rights. Whereas, the upper caste women have to suppress their tears, even when they lose their child.

Women are considered secondary citizens in almost all castes and classes of our society. Compared to the less privileged sections such as Dalits and the Adivasis, the Brahmin women are far more restricted and reserved in documenting their inner voices. They are confined to the four walls of their homes, following the traditional dictum. Rukminiamma, Sharma’s mother stood with tears in her eyes besides her husband and is not even allowed to touch and hold Sharma who was saved from drowning. Raj Kumar says:

Men folk in the patriarchal system commanded more respect inside and outside the household. The idea that they were the sole bread earners of the house, perhaps, made them assume superior power over women. Women, thus, had subservient lives. Their every movement was controlled by the men. They never allowed their womenfolk to cross the boundaries of their houses, not even for socialising - let alone allow them to

work outside and be independent economically. Thus women were confined to their inner apartments. (82)

In *Beauteous Light*, Shyamala portrays Elamma as a tough and courageous girl who jumped into the tank to save Somashekara Sharma, a Brahmin boy. Sharma is then given honey and goat's milk, the delicacies kept away by the Madigas even from their own children. Sharma's family is presented as a contrast to Elamma's. Sharma is declared 'polluted' for his rendezvous with Elamma and is expelled from the community itself. "He is one of you now. He does not belong to the agraharam any longer. It is up to you whether you want to raise him or kill him..."(81). Madiga elders thought to themselves:

"These people do not care even for their own. How will they think of people like us?". The Dalits are willing to adopt him. "The dog which cares for its puppies is better than these people. Sharma may not have been born here, but he is a child. He'll grow up here, along with our children..."(62). Dalit children was tortured and abused everywhere in society but these children are fortunate enough to be born in a household where everyone loves and cares for them. The support and encouragement they gained from their family enables them to face the dangers of being a Dalit.

These stories are not the traditional narratives of the upper caste violence and oppression. Instead, Shyamala writes with a newness, wit and sharp subversion. The collection is a site of many contradictions. The Dalits have close relationship with land but they don't have even a small piece of their own. They make footwear for others, but they are not fortunate enough to wear one, even

while laboring on thorn infested fields. Shyamala makes the reader feel what they are missing by not being a Madiga: the pleasures like the ‘scent of new rice’, ‘the taste of Jowar sap’, ‘the power to invoke the Goddess’ and so on.

Dalit women are a distinct social group and cannot be marked under the general categories of “Dalit” or “woman”. Women in the stories are intolerant of the hierarchical structures and discrimination within and outside their family. As a Dalit writer Shyamala penned Dalit experience of humiliation, exploitation and marginalization but at the same time she does not overtly politicize grief and suffering which is the recurrent motif in all Dalit Writings. This collection is a landmark in Telugu Dalit Literature and a melting pot of many of Shyamala’s own concerns including the aspirations and hopes of Dalit women. It gives us glimpses of the life, myths and beliefs of the Madiga’s. In K.Lalita’s words Shyamala’s stories do not fit into the ideological framework of Dalit Literature. It doesn’t have a political purpose either. It weaves together the small pleasures, joys, tears, work, life, relationships, music and culture of Dalits. This is an attempt to demonstrate the diversities in Dalit Literature rather than compartmentalizing it just as a tale of tears.

Dalits any more are not like Ekalavya, who was ready to sacrifice the thumb of his right hand as an offering to his cunning guru who finds him as a threat to his dear Arjuna. Dalits in the society were not allowed to learn, enter the religious place, and even their touch was decried as the polluting force by the upper caste people. A group of emancipated educated Dalits is gradually rising no doubt

their passion, resistance, thoughts and ideology will trickle down which ultimately results in an egalitarian society.

Works cited

Kumar, Raj. *Dalit Personal Narratives: Reading Caste, Nation and Identity*. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan. 2010. Print.

Limbale, Sharankumar. *Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature: History, Controversies and Considerations*. New Delhi: Orient Blackswan. 2010. Print.

Shyamala, Gogu. *Father May be an Elephant and Mother Only a Small Basket, But... .* New Delhi: Navayana. 2012. Print.

Moans and Cries in the Hurst of Desertion and Indifference: Voice of a Tribal Author; A Self-reflective Examination of the Fourth World in Narayan's 'Ooralikkudi'.

Neena V. S.

Tribals are the ones who are marginalised and dumped in the backyards of the society, primarily due to the geographical compulsions. Tribals are nobody's slaves. We are blessed with the practical knowledge of living...I am not a dalit writer, but an Adivasi writer. Narayan (*Kocharethi* preface)

The word 'tribal' or 'adivasi' brings to our mind an image of half-naked men and women, with arrows and spears in their hands, coloured feathers on their heads, and speaking in a language which is hardly intelligible to us. Their lives are often conceived as mixed with the myths of crude savagery and cannibalism. No matter how loud we raise our voice of concern to rescue them from the clutches of extinction and degeneration, deep inside our minds, we always identify them with 'the other' who still live in line with their traditional values, customs and beliefs. The tribals are also cast in a weird manner in the media.

The tribal people of India are called 'scheduled tribes' in the Indian constitution. The designation, invented by the British, covers arbitrarily two hundred and fifty five ethnic communities which are economically and socially least advanced and are the earliest inhabitants of India. They are the descendents of the original settlers, who chose to live close to nature. They have been receding into forests and high altitude mountains, where they could live in peace by embracing their own customs and beliefs. Various names used to indicate the tribals show a type of habitat occupied by them. The popular examples are 'vanya jati' (castes of forests), 'vanavasi' (inhabitants of forests), 'pahari' (hill dwellers), 'adivasi' (first settlers) and so on. Considering various aspects, it is possible to assume that the tribals in India are the descendants of pre-Aryan communities, who preserves a distinguishable identity in their independent tribal existence. The Dalits and the Tribals are included in the framework of Fourth World identity. The term 'Fourth world' was coined by George M. Posluns in 'Fourth World: An Indian Reality' (1974). The term is perceived as the circumscription of Native Americans, Aborigines of Australia and the Dalits and the Tribals of India. Fourth world has become synonymous for stateless, impoverished and marginalised indigenous people. It refers to those human beings who are subjected to social exclusion, especially people leading romantic, pastoral or 'unusual' way of life which in general is considered outside the modern norms.

Since the Adivasis are the people of nature, their life is entwined with the life and rhythms of nature and seasons. They are part and parcel of the environment itself. They listen to nature and feel with and move along with nature. The tribal way of life is very much

dictated by the forest right from birth to death. The forest occupies a crucial position in the growth of the tribal culture and economy. In this context it is indeed ironical to state that the poorest people of India live in the area of the richest natural resources. Tribals are among the most deprived and oppressed sections of India.

The Western Ghats as well as the coastal plains of Kerala are home to a number of tribes. Most of the tribes of Kerala belong to the family of Dravidians. The mountainous parts of Kerala are inhabited by tribes such as, 'paniya', 'kapu', 'kanikkar', 'kadar', 'oorali' and the like. Cultural exuberances of these tribes are rightly highlighted in diverse aspects. They build their settlements in the dense forest grounds and also on the top of mountains. Due to the rugged topography of the region, these tribes of Kerala remain undisturbed by any kind of intrusion from the foreigners.

'Ooralies' are among the few tree-dwelling tribes of India, found around the famous 'Periyar Tiger Reserve'. Ooralies are a special clan of wandering aborigines, who prefer farming (agricultural activities) only on the virgin soil. The headman of Ooralies is known as 'kanikkaran' who regulates the customary practices. The medicine man is called 'plathy'. They adhered strictly to marriage by exchange. The traditional occupation of the Ooralies was hunting and food gathering. They live in tree huts known as 'pantha'. 'Ooralikkudi' simply means the region where 'ooralies' dwell/settle in large groups. It is a matter of anonymity whether these ooralies had any indigenous language of their own. Their language is an amalgam of Malayalam and Tamil.

‘Ooralikkudi’, the tribal novel takes its birth from the very virile and vibrant pen of Narayan, author of ‘Kocharethi’, India’s first novel by an Adivasi writer about his community. The novel is about the ‘Araya’ community, as it existed in the early 20th century. Due to certain demographic and geographic compulsions ‘the Arayas’ were isolated from the other communities. Interaction with other communities and religious conversion resulted in the erosion of the tribal identity and culture. The novel is an act of resistance against the misrepresentation of his community by the literary and the literate world. Narayan belongs to the ‘Malayaraya’ tribe in the Eastern hills of Kerala. He lived in the community till the age of 22 and has concrete knowledge about the systems and practices that existed and are currently in practice amongst the tribal folks.

Tribal literature comprises of those writings which originate from the ones who are sidelined by both the mainstream and the dalit literature. No one at first gave voice to the lives and resistance endeavours of these receding tribal population, who were shrinking in numbers and confining to the very core of nature. As an exception, some writers did penetrate into the harsh realities and traumatic lives of these tribal people, but only with a sense of compassion or sympathy. The history and evolution of the tribals are also written from the perspective of the conquerors.

The misrepresentations are marginalising a community that is already marginalised. I wondered what I could write about and that is when I decided to stick to what I know the best. Narayan (from an interview given to *The New Indian Express*)

‘Ooralikkudi’ begins from a point where blind beliefs and rituals started showing the signs of disappearance among the tribe. ‘Ooru’ is a cluster of families and ‘alunnavan’ means one who rules. Digging deep down the pages of history, evidences prove that once this tribe was wealthy and dominant. Their high sense of unity and togetherness was shattered as a result of some kind of betrayal by other clans. Following “the split” some mighty clans started dominating the hapless tribe by imposing a handful of restrictions on them. Ooralies were not supposed to build permanent residence. Everything related to their home, “pantha” as they call, was of temporary in nature. Evidently they “make-live and leave” their abode for one reason or the other. They were denied weapons, and the worst of all, pregnant women among them were to be deserted to lead a life of seclusion till the process of delivery was completed. There might have been a hidden/dubious agenda behind this act, so as to limit the pace of growing population among them. Subsequently the remaining population got confined into the inner recesses of the forest.

Ooralies are being badly victimised in the modern phase of exploitation and encroachment in the name of development. They possess hide bound customs and regulations and are very backward in educational aspects. The novel explores how certain demonic forces in the guise of modernisation gradually victimises and tramples ooralies of a particular region, called ‘Kombodinji’, into nothingness. Tribal unrest in the light of eviction of Ooralies from kombodinji is the major issue discussed in the novel. Marginalization, landlessness, alienation of land and displacement are the root causes of their unrest. They strongly believed in the interconnectedness of the past, the

present and the future. They possess rich traditional knowledge. They had a deep understanding of the nature around them, they could sense the very echoes and rhythms of nature and interpret the sights and sounds around them. They were all well accustomed with their secluded lives. Ooralies as a clan miserably failed to understand the malignity of the immigrants. This is infact a collective failure of the clan. Due to their innate sense of virtue, Ooralies easily fell preys to the gimmicks of the encroachers. “All the Ooralies should be flogged off from here. Not even a single soul should be left behind”.(129)

The advent of the non-tribals adversely affect the growth and progress of Ooralies greatly. The unscrupulous exploitation in the modern times has walloped them into the precipice of destitution and suffering. The entire story revolves around the lives of two generations, from Charan to that of his son Choman(Soman, who is educated). The latter part of the novel portrays episodes of land grabbing and encroachments by certain non-tribes who cunningly manipulate records to secure the ownership of lands. Kuttichan is the representative of the class of land grabbers who has vested interests, while playing behind the scene and thus successfully mastering not only the land, but the collective consciousness of the innocent tribe also. The historic Kerala Land Reforms Act 1963, with its ‘land to tiller’ policy unfortunately turned out to be a nightmare for the adivasis. Under the new law, the occupiers of the land (settled farmers) became the owners and the original owners (the tribals) became landless and were reduced to mere agricultural labourers. This resulted in the total derailment of their life. “Ey... He is an Oorali;

he does not know anything about the magic of education. Its quiet easy to befool him.” (66)

Educational backwardness remains the greatest hurdle that holds back Ooralies from acquiring knowledge about what is happening around them. A group of tribals under Soman breaks the shell and marches towards the tribal school to get educated. The fellow students had an air of contempt towards Oorali kids. Even teachers had grudges about the schooling of Oorali children. Most of the Oorali kids bore their traditional names like ‘Charan’, ‘Choman’, ‘Koran’ etc. As a result one can easily catch at least half a dozen of Charans and Chomans from a single class. It was indeed a herculean task for the teachers to rename these children. They refined their existing names. Thus ‘Choman’ became ‘Soman’, ‘Koran’ was altered to Gopi, ‘Thei’ to Devi etc. It took time even for the Oorali kids to master their new names. This is one of the lighter moments mentioned in the novel. It should be assumed that the quality education which is available to the majority is not available to the tribals. Tribal children should be encouraged to send to cities and towns for better education and for higher studies. Vaulting over all the obstacles, the second generation of Ooralies mentioned in the novel, managed to secure education. Getting educated from the special schools was not at all an enjoyable experience for the Oorali children. “Oorali kids were viewed with disgust and contempt. They were seen deserted in the school premises. They stared at other kids who wore colourful dress”.(66)

The power of education in fact gave them the impetus to raise their voice against land grabbers and the other immigrants and small scale merchants. Thus they realised the fact that Ooralies were

utilized as mere labourers to clear the forest. “Ooralies are a gang of accursed beings. They should not have been educated” (84)

It is evident from the novel that Ooralies who belong to the earlier generation fell preys to the immigrant land grabbers. For instance, the hapless Kadutha was given false promises by Kuttichan and thereby the latter grabs Kadutha’s land. Onachan, another immigrant, bought several acres of land from the Ooralies for a measly price. Education should be utilized as a powerful weapon for enlightening the tribals. The inaccessibility of educational institutions has made different impacts on different tribal communities. The government has been implementing several programmes for the educational improvement of the tribals, but unfortunately the levels of awareness and utilization of these schemes are relatively low among the tribal folk.

The status of the women in this tribe is painfully pathetic. Apart from the oppression they face from the mainstream society, they are to face domination from their men as well. Ooralies exhibited a contemptuous attitude towards pregnancy and childbirth. During menstruation, Oorali women are forced to live separately in a ‘pantha’(house) specially built for the purpose. Poor economic conditions, usurpation of their land by outside landlords, displacement and poverty are forcing Oorali men to migrate to urban areas in search of employment. It is in this context that Oorali women are being exploited by employers and they are found to be in a vulnerable position. Thanka is given fake promise of marriage by Kuttichan. After a while Kuttichan and a group of anti-socials brutally raped and dumped her. There is no law to question these kinds of ruthless crimes. “She feels that at times, an ordeal is skulking

somewhere in the spinney, staring at her, all of a sudden, it will come out and pounces upon her, either to take her life away or to violate her modesty”(118)

It is very much clear that Thanka was already aware of the misfortune that was about to happen. Still she couldn't do anything to check that. Oorali women as depicted in the novel are emotionally fragile and weak. They are easily gullible and don't know anything about the act of resistance. This is not the sole case with Thanka. Another Oorali woman (Madavi) in the novel was also mercilessly raped and murdered by the immigrants. Women are sometimes used as mere instruments for sexual gratification and also as trump cards by the encroachers to secure lands.

Health is one of the serious problems among all tribal communities. Malnutrition, ignorance and superstitious beliefs prevent Ooralies from maintaining a sophisticated health history. They are facing severe problems including inability to get timely treatment for patients, especially during childbirth. Several Oorali women die prematurely in the process without securing proper medical assistance (the death of Velumbi in the novel).

Struggle as a symbol is manifested in the novel both physically and emotionally. Ooralies are cunningly betrayed. Their roots are uprooted, their land was grabbed, their language, culture almost alienated and destroyed. They cut the trees but they do not fell trees as the factories do. They break the stones but they do not destroy the hills. There is a subtle difference between how these Ooralies utilize the forest and the way the non tribals make use of the forest. It is from their traditional abode that Ooralies are evicted.

They are the indigenous people and the rightful owners of the forest land where they live for generations. I know that we (Adivasis) can never be part of the mainstream, as there are no takers for such an assimilation. I feel even now, there is a collective attempt to degrade and suppress Adivasi culture and its traditional literature. Narayan (from an interview given to *The New Indian Express*)

The economic conditions of the Dalits and the Tribals are fraught with poverty and unemployment. The tribals are forced to flee to the margins, they are “own land’s landless people”. They continue to face prejudice and are socially distanced and often face violence from the society. Majority of the population regards them as primitive.

There are many who rue over the life of the tribals, who can only shed tears for them, but there is hardly anyone to wipe the tears of these children of nature. This approach has to be changed. Narayan is not from an affluent family, his premises supplied him with the necessary confidence to pen the untold stories about his people. All his writings are the result of his prolonged personal experience with the life around him. It is the collective voice of a clan that reverberates through his writings. There are many who thrashed his novels and criticised him for not having any particular literary style. Narayan’s novels unravel before us not only the magical mystery of the wilderness but the very blunt stories of encroachment as well. The historical sense of the tribals are psychologically conceived through the thoughts of the older generation of the tribals presented in the novel. They are seen hesitant, as they always fail to evaluate the transformations taking place around them. They can feel the pace of the change but are unfortunately unable to evaluate

the progress that change can bring about in their lives. For them, the past is a dream, a soothing dream, they are seen anxious about their future and hence forget to live in the present. Choman is the flag bearer of transformation and refinement in the novel. He is the link who was seen at first groaning between the two generations. He is infact the only character in the novel who has the prowess to voice his protest. Cleansed under the fire of education he started questioning hollow rituals and practices within his community. Choman's words were sacrilegious even to his parents. "Girl children are not to be treated like cattle. They are not to be bought and sold in the market"(80)

In reality the novelist could only wish that all the greedy immigrants who grab the land of the tribals should rightfully be punished. But that kind of a wish was very much far from actuality. The grabbers had themselves assimilated so well in the forest evicting the indigenous people forever. Towards the end of the novel a small group of Ooralies were spared in Kombodinji, but they have also started feeling the signs of uneasiness. Choman avenges impeccably at the end. Once he feels gratified, he realises that Kombodinji is now 'other men's land'. It is not at all wise to stay there, clinging on to age old customs and practices. Choman acquires the stature of an image breaker and he dares to settle somewhere else along with Thanka.

Here is the land where the most modern and the poorest live together and move together. The Ooralies were once the rulers of the land and now most of them are worse than slaves. The anti-social forces and the brutal immigrants are rightfully punished in the

novel. The plight of Kuttichan and his deserving end serves as a warning to those who unlawfully grab the land as well as the happiness of the Ooralies. Another positive note in the novel is about the rise of a class of Ooralies in the present generation who realize the worth and value of literacy and education. Narayan strongly believes and firmly declares the fact that the image of the tribal people has been erroneously represented and miscoloured in the media. He feels that tribal literature comprises of those writings which originate from the ones who are sidelined by both mainstream and dalit literature. Narayan has nothing to say but he wants to declare to the main stream society the following. “I am unaware of the kind of verdict the mainstream society is going to pronounce upon me. Kindly forgive me if you feel that what I did was wrong”. Narayan (from an interview given to *The New Indian Express*)

Works Cited

- Patteti, Raja Sekhar. *Exploring Fourth World Literatures Tribals, Adivasis, Dalits Vol 1* : Prestige Books New Delhi, 2011. Print.
- Narayan. *Ooralikudi* : Sahitya Pravarthaka Co-operative Society Ltd, 2009. Print.
- Gupta, Alpana. *Dalit Consciousness and Dalit Poetry* : Yking Books Jaipur, 2013. Print.
- Anil S. “Cries in the Wilderness of Desertion and Apathy”. *New Indian Express* 28 February 2010, Southern Ed; Print.

Topistics and Environmental Changes since Colonization in Oodgeroo Noonuccal's *The Dawn is at Hand*

Susan Alexander

Australian aboriginal literature, especially poetry presents the spectacle of having identified representation of the natural environment as a major theme. Australia's cultural identity and its blending with the natural landscape is emblemized in the Australian coat of arms entwined with wattle. Contemporary Australian poetry is also characterized by a definite inclination towards the landscape and nature. The ingredients in it skillfully combine to comprise an environmentally oriented work. The paper Topistics and Environmental Changes since Colonization in Oodgeroo Noonuccal's *The Dawn is at Hand* is an attempt to discover how the poems of the Australian aboriginal poet and educator Oodgeroo Noonuccal in the anthology *The Dawn is at Hand* trace the changing history of Australia, its environment and landscape when explored through the framework of environmental historiography and Topistics.

To be called an environmental text Lawrence Buell puts forward the following criteria: The non-human environment is present

not merely as a framing device but as a presence that begins to suggest that human history is implicated in natural history. The human interest is not understood to be the only legitimate interest. Human accountability to the environment is part of the text's ethical orientation. Some sense of the environment as a process rather than a constant or a given is at least implicit in the text. (The Environmental Imagination 7)

Examined from these aspects the poems of Oodergoo Noonuccal can be placed in the canon of environmental poetry. Four decades back it would have been difficult to think of aboriginal environmental poetry. Today one can easily think of Oodergoo Noonuccal's distinctive and pioneering poetry which is a reflection of a literary legacy that combines in it the principles and policies which she upheld in her life. Born as Kathleen Jean Mary Ruska, known until 1988 as Kath Walker, Oodergoo Noonuccal was the daughter of Edward Ruska, a member of the Noonuccal tribe who were the traditional inhabitants of Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island). The transition of Kath Walker to Oodergoo Noonuccal as a cultural guardian, educator and ambassador for her people was the result of her father Edward's campaign for bettering the conditions of the aborigines. In her protest against the continuing aboriginal disadvantage, she returned the awards given to her and later accepted the Noonuccal tribal name Oodergoo which means paper bark. Her first volume of poetry, *We Are Going*, was the first book by an aboriginal woman to be published.

The Dawn is at Hand is poetry that has a strong moral or ethical vision, and it has its own worldview. It contains within it

poems of protest against social injustice, as well as poems against environmental degradation since the coming of the white colonizers. They are poems that create social awareness, poems of protest and poems of environmental understanding. Critical studies can analyze these poems through any framework and that is the valid reason for the success of these poems. The invigorating chantlike poems of Oodgeroo Noonuccal in this collection present a panorama of Australia's varying landscape and environment and can be considered as a treasure both historical and literary. Her poems sketch the passing beauty of the physical world. As John Elder posits: "If the world's beauty were not always passing out of the world, poetry would not be necessary" (147). Reading through the poems we witness the transformation of indigenous Australia. This volume is her first book in English to be published outside Australia.

"Then and Now" from *The Dawn is at Hand* speaks of the Noonuccal's desire she has for the aboriginal lifestyle to be like it was before white colonization. The Assimilation Policy forced the aborigines to change their life style and live apart from their traditional ways.

But dreams were shattered by rushing car
By grinding tram and hissing train
And I see no more of my tribe old

As I walk alone in the teeming town. (*The Dawn* 125)

The arrival of the white settlers in 1788 imposed new customs and beliefs into the aboriginal people. The erosion of the traditional

way of life resulted. Aboriginal names and customs faded. Leaving behind what was their own they were forced into towns and cities. Being one of the most urbanized countries in the whole world, land clearing in Australia brought in factories belching smoke where once according to Noonuccal yams were dug from. This sense of displacement and destruction of their land is according to Tasmanian aboriginal activist Jim Everett: “like ripping pages from our library books, it is like cutting the hearts of our people, cutting our identity and our cultural philosophy that sustains our spiritual connectedness to country.”(Jullian Mundy)

According to E.V Walter “for the Aborigines, physical nature is a domain of located experience. They cannot separate their way of feeling from their way of thinking about places.” (Placeways 139). The world of the Australian aborigines is one of the last surviving examples of perfect topistic unity. E.V Walter uses the neologism “topistics” for the study of placeways. “The full range of meaning located as a place- sensory perceptions, moral judgments, passions, feelings, ideas and orientations- belong to an order of intelligibility that I call “topistic reality” (21). This topistic unity has changed with colonization:

Here where they have memorial park

Onetime lubras dug for yam

One time our dark children played

There where the railway yards are now (125)

For the aborigines familiar land shapes give form to intuitive feelings about life’s deeper mysteries. Where Europeans locate a

dead landscape the aborigines find a theatre of energy. It is this energy that is lost with the conversion of a barren land to banks, shops, advertisements and neon lights. A scroll through these places with which they are connected creates in them the excitement of a devout pilgrim traversing the holy places in Jerusalem. Amos Rapoport opines that the Australian aborigines feel that the land owns them- that they are the spiritual property of the land. This is how the aborigines experience the place as a whole and as suggested by the Greek term ‘haptein’. This concept of haptic perception is “the perpetual system by which animals and men are literally in touch with the environment”. (Placeways 134). It links the body to the environment enabling one to feel the world in one’s bones. Where children played now today they have railway yards. They have lost the soul of the place. To them the universe is a sacred place. Human relationships are filled with perceptions and meanings of haptic experience. The place where lubras dug for yam is no more there. Active exploratory touch permits both the grasping of an object and a grasp of its meanings. The lubras, in touch with the environment had a knowledge of the earth and its meanings. When railway yards took over the places where the children played haptic perception is lost. There are only memorial parks. Such architectural structures are raised by man to contribute to his mental health, power and pleasure. The arrival of the white colonizers stole them of their land and their peace with murder and rape. Her words convey a profound dispossession a relationship shredded by modern civilization. The poem expresses the anger of the poet when she sees the development and commercialization of her home place. Joy Harjo in her prose poem *Autobiography* asserts that the “land will insert itself into

human consciousness even when we attempt to forget it” (Bryson 50). The poem is a demonstration of how Noonuccal falls in line with American poets like Joy Harjo and Wendell Berry when she says that modern alienation is a symptom of a lost sense of place. As Lawrence Buell states:

What we require, then is neither disparagement nor celebration of place-sense but an account of those specific conditions under which it significantly furthers. . . . environmental humility, an awakened place awareness that is also mindful of its limitations and respectful that place moulds us as well as vice versa. (253)

In “The Dispossessed” Oodgeroo Noonuccal speaks of the coming of the whites leaving the indigenous tribes dispossessed

The whiteman claimed your hunting grounds

And you could not remain

.....

They brought you Bibles and disease

The liquor and the gun

.....

A dying race you linger on

Degraded and oppressed

Outcasts in your own native land

You are the dispossessed. (The Dawn 35)

Noonuccal presents this poem as a parable of the Australian frontier and an indictment of the reckless habits that quickly exhausted the land's natural richness and abundance. Wendell Berry, the American poet in his "Handing Down" puts it as "The mistakes of the old/ become the terrors of the young. (Collected Poems 38). The place –history paradigm offers a tool by which to analyze Noonuccal's poetry. W.S Merwin, the American poet in his *The Rain in the Trees* present the insatiable appetite of the modern generation which transforms Hawaii from a paradise into the world's capital of endemic species. This description of Hawaii's change from a sacred place to a sick place is true of the land and culture of the aborigines also. Environmental historiography of a land is compressed into a few lines when the poet grimly reminds the readers of the coming of the white settlers. Donald Hughes, the noted environmental historian in his *An Environmental History of the World* quotes the words of Big Neidjie, elder of a Gagudju clan; "The tree same as me. This piece of ground he grow you" (20). The aborigines had an attitude of reverence and encouraged practices of conservation that would tend to sustain the wild animals upon which the hunters depended. Their treatment of natural environment showed care, and was guided by attitudes that might today be called religious. Silas Roberts, an aboriginal leader calls their connection to everything natural as spiritual. Members of the community must defend it against human enemies from outside. Noonuccal calls her race as the food gatherers. But against the gun of the enemies their spears which were terribly effective against large marsupials had no effect. The reader is taken on an engrossing intellectual voyage through the facts and consequences of the salient cultural and bio- social

consequences of the coming of the Europeans. Alfred Crosby in his work *The Columbian Exchange* describes that “when Columbus arrived in America even the most advanced Indians were barely out of stone age and their armies were swept out by tiny bands of conquistadors” (21). The Indians died in droves of diseases the Europeans, Africans and Asians had accommodated themselves to long ago. A probable exception to this rule, the Australian aborigines, according to Noonuccal is a dying race which lingers on. The Australian met for the first time his most hideous enemy, not the white man or his black servant, but the invisible killers which those men brought in their blood and breath. It is estimated that over 750,000 Aboriginal people inhabited the island continent in 1788. The colonists were led to believe that the land was “terra nullius” (‘no one’s land’), which Lt James Cook declared Australia to be in 1770 during his voyage around the coast of Australia. But a systematic attempt to wipe out the Australian aborigines was a failure due to the tenacity, courage and underestimated strength of the people themselves. They linger on. The sufferings and courage of those who have told their stories instill respect and sensitivity. The same is true of First Nation People in all countries, but what shocks one is that in the case of Australian aborigines the abuse is still continuing in the twenty first century and still has not been truly remedied in the present. They continued to remain as “the dying race” lingering on and when they did not become extinct they became “the aboriginal problem”. Degraded and oppressed they are outcasts in their own land. When Dante undertook to define man’s place in the universe and conditions contributing to human misery and happiness the result was poem called the “Comedy”.

Here Noonuccal's attempt to illustrate the conditions of the aborigines resulted in the poem "The Dispossessed."

The primal tradition of the human race is the culture of hunting, fishing and gathering. This was the only way of life for more the majority of the time the human race existed. With the peopling of the earth it spread everywhere, was typical of early groups in Africa Eurasia, America and Australia and persisted in Mayallaluk ("Frog Dreaming Place" in Northern Australia) up to the twentieth century. But the hunters approached the animals and plants with reverence, killed them only when necessary and treated them with honour even after killing. Such cultural habits helped to adapt humans to the environment and to maintain balance with it. In "The Food Gatherers" she says:

We are the food gatherers
And all the busy lives we see
Fur and feathers, the large and small
With nature's plenty for us all
.....
For food is life and life is still
The old carnage and all must kill
Others, though why wise nature planned
The red rapine, who can understand
Only for food never for sport
The new evil the white man brought. (The Dawn 62)

This does not mean that the people who lived according to the primal tradition left nature undisturbed. They had visible effect on the environment. The kangaroos in aboriginal Australia were very swift and wary because the skilled hunters killed the slower ones. The aboriginal Australians introduced the dingo which became the feral and it competed with the native predators alike the Tasmanian devil. But as Donald Hughes notes the Australian aborigines devised systems of taboo, forbidding certain foods to certain people as a method of control.

The food gatherers busy and gay
Most of all we love our own
When as the dulled sun goes down
Fishers and hunters return home
To where the family fires burn
Food now and merriment
Bellies full and all content
Around the fires at wide night fall
This the happiest time of all. (62)

This is a substratum for all later stages and still lies importantly below the civilized veneer of modern societies. "In We are Going" Noonuccal states:

We belong here we are of the old ways
We are the coroboree and the boraground
We are the old sacred ceremonies

The laws of the elders
We are the wonder tales of Dream Time
The tribal legends told
We are the past, the hunts and the laughing
Games
.....
We are nature and the past, all the old ways
Gone now and scattered (The Dawn 107)

Edenic Australia is now lost. “In Return to Nature” she laments that she has now seen that nature’s enemy is “civilized me.” Though critics reject the ecological view of life to be modest and unheroic and a denial of the mental capacities of mankind, Joseph Meeker in his “The Comic Mode” asserts that “a return to nature would have to become far more complex than anything man has yet produced” (168). Encyclopedia of World Biography indubitably describes the theme of her writings as is given in In *Stradbroke Dreamtime* (1972). This is applicable to every poem that she has written too:

Noonuccal described her girlhood home as a place stocked with natural beauty ... [with] ferns and flowers growing in abundance [and] white miles of sand stretching as far as the eye could see. In the same piece, she lamented the fact that “Stradbroke is dying. The birds and animals are going. The trees and flowers are being pushed aside and left to die,” and assured the reader that “greedy, thoughtless, stupid, ignorant

man . . . will suffer. His ruthless bulldozers are digging his own grave. (11)

This change was not sudden. It began centuries back. But as Daniel G Payne notes: “Despite this profound change in the landscape and even despite localized economic disruptions caused by some of these ecological changes, the scope and direction of this metamorphoses wouldn’t be seriously called into question for over two centuries” (1). Mankind would have to cultivate a new more elaborate mentality capable of understanding intricate process without destroying them. Survival of man should depend on man’s ability to change himself rather than his environment. These tend to be the generic traits of the writings of Oodgeroo Noonuccal. Such characteristics can be seen in science fiction stories but in the verse form of Noonuccal they are accompanied by shrewd perception into the environment and require no apology for their literary or intellectual qualities.

Works Cited

Bryson, J Scott. *The West Side of any Mountain*. Iowa: U of Iowa P, 2005. Print.

Buell, Lawrence. *The Environmental Imagination*. Harvard: Bellknap, 1995. Print.

Crossby, Alfred. *The Columbian Exchange*. Connecticut: Greenwood, 1972. Print.

Elder, John. *Imagining the Earth: Poetry and the Vision of Nature*. Athens: U of Georgia P, 1985. Print.

- G.Payne, Daniel. Introduction. *Voices in the Wilderness*. Hanover: U of New England P, 1996. Print.
- Hughes, J. Donald. *An Environmental History of the World*. New York: Routledge, 2001. Print.
- Meeker, Joseph W. "The Comic Mode." *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. Ed. Cheryl Glotfelty, and Harold Fromm. Athens: U of Georgia P. 1996. Print.
- Mundy, Jullian. "Tassie Bypass Fight Goes On." *Koori Mail* 8 Sept.2010. 484 ed.: 8.Print.
- Noonuccal, Oodgeroo. *The Dawn is at Hand. Selected Poems*. New York,Marion Boyars.1992.Print.
- "Oodgero Noonuccal." *Australian Poetry Libraray*.n.d.Web. 27 December 2014 .
- "Oodgero Noonuccal." *Encyclopedia of World Biography*. n.d. Web. 13. Dec. 2016.
- Walter, Eugene Victor. *Placeways a Theory of the Human Environment*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1988. Print.

Traces of Highbrowed Innuendo from the Epic: a kaleidoscopic Reading of Antedated Scientific Truths in the *Mahabharata*

Meera Prasannan

To be an Indian or simply to live in India at any period in her recorded history, is to open oneself to the benign moral influence of the two epics- the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. Caste, creed, colour do not matter here, what matters is the degree, range and subtlety of exposure, which in turn determines the quality of the affected person's "indianness"(iv). This "large word" (iv) certainly means the very opposite of cultural myopia and has no connection with any kind of hypersensitive social inwardness. "The *Mahabharata* is the content of Indian collective consciousness" (iii), said the late V S Shuthankar, a famous Indologist and Sanskrit scholar in a lecture made in 1943.

The "eternal epic" (4), Mahabharata which describes the story of about two fifty years after Shanthanu's reign consists of about one lakh twenty five thousand narratives. These mutually linked stories give clues about science and technology which were practiced at that time, in the present and yet to be invented. Medical science

was practiced as a profession in those days. References regarding various aspects of meditative cure can be found in four Vedas of India. Events describing the roles of surgeons and physicians are there in the epic. Unlike ancient medical science which explored the pure consciousness of men, *Mahabharata* implies technologies like cloning, artificial fertilization etc.

Bhishma in his last hours asks Sanjaya to dismiss all the physicians and surgeons after giving proper honours since he takes dignity to die in a battle field lying upon a bed of arrows. This event in *Bhishmaparva* vividly states that numerous doctors were there during the times of Kuru dynasty, who were adept in plucking arrows out and healing wounds. The quotes from *Udyogaparva* and *Shantiparva* also assert the presence of physicians in those ages. “Yudhishtira marched talking with surgeons and physicians. . . and there assembled hundreds upon hundreds of skilled mechanics in receipt of regular wages and surgeons and physicians well versed in their own science” (279). As said in *Shantiparva*, “a wounded opponent should have his wounds attended to by skillful surgeons” (104).

Aspects of modern embryological studies are revealed in the conversation between Vidura and Dhritharashtra as mentioned in the initial pages of *Sthreeparva*. Vidhura explains to Dhritharashtra about the complete life stages of an embryo within the womb. The possibility of this is striking since that was a time before the invention of scanning. “The life activities of a foetus start at the same moment, when ‘*Virya*’ and ‘*Rajas*’ fuse together in the uterus. Later, by the fifth month, embryo develops all the organs. Later, the foetus takes

a posture where the head points to the vagina and the legs upwards” (479).

Abhimanyu, the son of Arjuna, better called as the “warrior of the womb,” learns the secret of entering into Chakravyuh when he was in Subhadra’s womb. But since she fell asleep when Arjuna taught her to escape Chakravyuh, Abhimanyu in her womb also lost the lesson. This resulted in the pathetic and tragic death of Abhimanyu, the young prince in the battlefield of Kurukshetra. Reading this in turn with the ‘Right Brain Education Theory’ of Dr Makota Shichida, a Japanese physician, it is proven that an embryo has extrasensory perception to identify and comprehend what happens outside the womb aided by his right brain and certain cells which are extremely sensitive to the external world.

Novel technique of in-vitro fertilization is mentioned in the *Adiparva* in relation to the birth of Kauravas. “Gandhari told Vyasa about the piece of flesh that she carried for two years and delivered. Vyasa took the flesh and cut it into a hundred pieces. After sprinkling water on them, he kept them in specially designed containers full of ghee. In the course of time, the pots broke open and hundred babies were born” (40).

The exotic birth of Kauravas is similar to in-vitro fertilization where sex cells of parents are brought together under prescribed conditions, eventually giving birth to embryos. This narrative also implies the stem cell discoveries through which a single cell multiplies to become an organ or even an organism. The heavenly imagination of Vyasa lightens the scope of technology to make foetus grow outside the human body which is still a future prospect of science.

The method of generating more than one clone from a single embryo is also a research area from *Mahabharata*.

Modern researches have revealed that sexual orgasm can control the lifespan and youthfulness of living creatures. Scientific studies say that the levels of various body fluids like ‘*Vatha*,’ ‘*Pitha*,’ and ‘*Kapha*’ can be regulated through regular sex and thus account for regular liveliness. In sexual relationship, the female partner enjoys greater orgasm compared to the male. These concepts proposed by science have been already mentioned in the ‘*Anusasanaparva*.’ The same idea is suggested by Vidura in ‘*Udyoga Parva*’ that sexual orgasm is a stress buster, which increases pain tolerance and provides better cardiovascular system, better skin and immunity. The absence of sexual life makes man old, physically and mentally at an early age. “Continuous rain destroys the strength of mountains. Sharp words hurt the minds and life without sexual relationship makes women older” (241).

Human quest for immortality is as old as the genesis of life. Man is in search of a method or panacea to get victory over death. Even though he hasn’t succeeded in this effort yet, many age defying medicines have been invented by human researches. Aging is a collection of cumulative changes to the molecular and cellular structure of an adult organism which increasingly disrupt metabolism resulting in pathology and death. The concept of ‘*mrtusanjeevani*’ medicine called ‘*amruthu*’ is disclosed in *Mahabharata*. *Devas* and *Asuras* were engaged in the task of extracting this holy medicine from the ocean of milk termed as ‘*Palazhi*’. The modern age defying medicines are in a way similar to the *amrutha* for which *Asuras*

and *Devas* fought each other. The event of extracting the elixir of life from *Palazhi* is recorded in *Adiparva* of *Mahabharata*.

Revolutionary changes are brought in the realms of physical and psychological orientation aided by science. Modern man is capable of abandoning the permanence of sex and consequences of gender through the execution of transgender surgeries. The complex as well as revolutionary notion of transgender operations is vividly mentioned in *Mahabharata*. It is marvelous to notice that Veda Vyasa has imagined about such a possibility even before hundreds of decades. Traces of transgender existence can be *Udyogaparva* regarding the birth and life of Shikhandi.

Shikhandi, a girl child was born to Drupada after long years of meditation to please Lord Shiva. At the time of her birth, the oracle said that she shall become a man in the future. Anticipating this, Shikhandi married the daughter of Hiranyavama. Since the prophesy was not fulfilled even after a long time, her marital relationship turned to be a disaster. In deep sorrow over this, Shikhandi left the palace and went to a forest. She sat and wept there. Daksha saw her and agreed to exchange his sex with her. Thus Shikhandi became a man. The same notion can be seen in Arjuna's life when the *Apsara* named Urvasi curses him that he will become a woman.

Primitive forms of bio-shield and advanced plastic surgeries can be excavated from the yielding soil of *Mahabharata*. The idea of the modification of DNA to suit the living conditions gave rise to the technology of plastic surgery. Karna, the son of God Surya is

born with a shield that guards him from weapons. This may be an Avatar by that particular alien by modifying his own DNA biomechanically to win his foe. It may be a biological similarity to incredibly strong exoskeletons attached to the body of amphibians like tortoise. Unlike artificial exoskeleton used by humans, Karna's '*kavachakundalas*' were blended to his body.

The technologies impregnated in the field of medical science are revolutionary as well as unfathomable nowadays. Reproduction and childbirth is an area where perennial studies are in vogue. Ectopic pregnancies and inter species pregnancies have captured the attention of the whole world especially the scientific arena. Lucid sketches of these state of the art technologies can be observed in the complex terrain of the greater Sanskrit epic.

Ectopic pregnancy simple means male pregnancy by having an embryo implanted in the abdomen of a man. Even though the ovum fertilizes in the female womb, it grows in the paternal abdomen. The narrative in *Vanaparva* about the birth of Mandhathav from the king Yuvanaswa carries traces of this scientific innovation. Unlike ectopic implantation, inter species pregnancy enabled the production of genetically hybridized organisms. In this technique, male and female sex cells of different species are fused artificially and give birth to a new creature carrying the traits of both species. Veda Vyasa in *Bhishmaparva* informs the king Janameya about the exotic events that would happen in their country using his prophetic faculties. As the omen for an imminent jeopardy Vyasa foretells that, "Donkey will take birth from cows and cows will be born from horses in the near future. Man will bear the child and gods shall

carry foxes. Tornadoes will strike the face of earth... and oceans will over cede their boundaries destructively” (527). Interspecies experimentations of modern scientists have resulted in the generation of Mule and Hinny, different varieties of organisms which are produced in this way.

The cosmos is composed of innumerable organisms, both visible and invisible to the naked eyes. The presence of micro organisms which can't be sensed by human eyes was detected after the invention of microscope by Robert Hook in 1600. But in the pages of this very ancient epic we encounter the possibilities for the existence of microscopic organisms. “I do not behold any creature in this world that supports life without doing any act of injury to others. Animals live upon animals. This mobile and immobile universe is food for living creatures...there are many creatures that are so minute that their existence can only be inferred” (277). These quotes of Arjuna from *Shanthiparva* clearly imply the persistence of minute organisms that lives by consuming other organisms or matters.

Modern science clearly states the limitation of human eye. The eye has limited size and therefore limited sight gathering power. Ophthalmologists claim that since human eye has limited frequency, it can only see things in visible wave lengths. We see not what exists but only what we are capable to see. IBM Research Lab has developed Refractive Laser Eye technology which enables man to see things in non visible wave lengths also, by exposing laser rays into the eyes without damaging the living tissues. In all episodes of Mahabharata where Lord Krishna discloses his '*viswaroopa*' to Narada, Bhishma, Arjuna, Drona and Sanjaya, he sends very intense

rays like lightning and light from stars to enable them with special vision, so as to witness the all powerful figure of the Lord. Concluding, the light rays which Lord Krishna sent resemble to the modern laser eye technology.

Kurukshetra war otherwise known as “*Dharma yudha*”(15) was staged in the soil of kurukshetra in Haryana most probably in 3067 BC and lasted for a span of 18 days. Historical studies reveal that innumerable weapons of severe magnitude were frequently used in the war. ‘Asthra’s (missiles) and ‘Dhanush’ (launcher) were specially designed tools which were strong enough to hurt or even kill men. All these weapons require extremely refined technologies for their manufacture. So these tools might not have been made in this planet, but gifted by aliens. There were also catastrophic instruments like Karna’s ‘*nagasthra*’ and Vishnu’s ‘*sudarshanachakra*’ which will return to the launcher after completing the purpose of launch. These kinds of ‘asthras’ resemble the modern reusable missiles launched especially for aerospace studies. As encapsulated in the *Aswamedhika parva*, rays from the weapons penetrated human bodies and took the lives away. This alludes to the gamma rays emitting weapons sought by nations for defense now.

The death toll of this great war of 18 days is apparently 1.6 billion as estimated in *Musalaparva* and *Sthreeparva*. Usual *asthras* or missiles cannot consume such a great magnitude of populace within a short time period. There must have been more catastrophic weapons which could wipe away thousands in a single swoop.

The archaeological excavations at Mohanjadaro unfold the occurrence of an atomic destruction which dates back to 2000 BC- 3000 BC. The nuclear debris found there must be the remains of the great *dharma yudha*, as scientists and historians conclude. The extract taken from *musala parva* validates this archaeological assumption. Myriad number of nuclear weapons which explodes by emitting heat and light were present in the eras of Kuru dynasty. The greater jeopardy that was staged in Kurukshethra was purely a consequent of this.

The use of aircraft in the ancient times is validated by some evidences found in the Mahabharata. Even though the credit for the invention of the aircrafts is ascribed to the Wright brothers who lived in the 20th century, mentions about ‘*vimanas*’ (aeroplanes) can be viewed in the extensive sphere of Mahabharata. As described in the *Dronaparva*, *vimanas* were shaped like spheres and can move in the air at great speed. *Vanaparva* avouches Arjuna’s sight of *vimanas* in the city of Indra, ‘Amaravathi’, and the journey of Draupadi, Yudhishtira, Nakula and Sahadeva with Khatolkacha, the son of Bhima to the ashram of Badarika through air. ‘Tripura *vimana*’ and Mahendra’s *vimana* are often mentioned in the pages of *Mahabharata*.

Being a folk epic narrated in the third century BC, the *Mahabharata* unfolds unfathomable vistas of science and technology implicitly and explicitly. The *Mahabharata* is an epitome of the timelessness of art. It is impregnated with notions which still hold good and relevant. This “*dharma grandha*” addresses everything

that regards the living organisms, the non living materials and the spiritual consequences of life.

Works Cited

Dhawan, R. K., "The Case for Comparative Literature." *Between the Lines: A Textbook of Comparative Literature*. Ed. K. M Krishnan. Thrissur: Current Books, 2013. 54. Print.

Lal, Purushottama. Preface. *P Lal Edition of Mahabharata* by Lal. Michigan UP, 1980. i-ix. Print.

Rameshwar Rao, Ranishanta. *Mahabharata*. New Delhi: Orient P, 1997. Print.

Doyle, Christopher. C. "Science and Technology in Mahabharata." N.p (2010) Web. 20 Jan. 2015. <http://www.christophercdoyle.com/tag/science-in-the-mahabharata>

Sensarma, Priyadarsan. *Kurukshetra War: A Military Study*. Ganganagar: D. Roy, (1975). Web. 20 Dec 2014. <https://scholar.google.co.in>

Traversing the Amorphous: Enigmatic Self-actualisation in Dharavi

Dawn Mariat Mathew

Slums have dotted the backdrop of many large cities in the less developed world since early times. With increasing urbanisation rates in the second half of the 20th century, they have in most cases proliferated. Slums have become a global phenomenon and Dharavi in Mumbai is repeatedly called the largest slum in Asia, for its filthy, pest-ridden surroundings with no basic amenities. But, after many years, Dharavi has proven itself a promising part of Mumbai, with a whole lot of eminent natives. Traditionally the term ‘culture’ refers to a process by which the mindset of a group of people is collectively encoded. However, the distinction between ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture is wiped off, thereby popularizing the term ‘popular culture’.

According to the United Nations Agency UN-HABITAT, a slum is a run-down area of city characterised by sub-standard housing and squalor and lacking in tenure security. In *Slums in India*, Henna Tabussum says, “the term ‘slum’ has traditionally referred to housing areas that were once relatively affluent but which deteriorated as the original dwellers moved on to newer and better parts of the city, but has come to include the vast informal settlements found in cities

in the developing world” (1). A mixture of demographic, social, economic and political reasons like rapid rural to urban migration, colonialism, politics, natural disasters, poverty, unemployment and social conflicts led to the growth of slums. Again, colonialism and segregation remain roots for the sprouting of slums such as Dharavi slum of Mumbai, the slums of Lagos and so on. In short, slums mostly grow from the nothingness of the voiceless poor and also from the greed for abundance of the voiced aristocracy.

The Indian megacity Mumbai has an estimated population of about fourteen million. Of those, only about thirty five percent live in permanent housing and the remaining sixty five in informal settlements. Located in the heart of Mumbai, Dharavi has a population of more than 600,000 people residing in 100,000 makeshift homes. “Dharavi was not born yesterday. . . It existed when Mumbai was still Bombay” (20), says Kalpana Sharma in *Rediscovering Dharavi*.

Yet, Dharavi has proved its uniqueness, being at the centre of all things, geographically, psychologically and spiritually. To the entire process of urbanisation, the forces at work in Dharavi, serve as a window. The vibrant, self-sufficient and self-sustaining Dharavi residents have conquered the part and parcels of the society which include art, architecture, literature, economy, culture and politics. It is wonderfully placed at the apex, in the world of literary creations. Be it novels, films or documentaries, it has captured many writers’ imagination as a model slum. *Poor Little Rich Slum*, the docu-fiction co-authored by Rasmi Bansal, Dee Gandhi and Deepak

Gandhi, bear testimony to the world-wide popularity of the extraordinary slum.

In *Poor Little Rich Slum*, the authors consider Dharavi as a space from where one cannot see the skies. It gives a collection of real life experiences of the residents of this soil who are born there and choose not to leave their land. It is a new world, where the fittest survives through hardships. The docu-fiction portrays Dharavi as a dynamic institution full of verve and vitality. Cutting across humanity in all its squalor and glory, the authors present a kaleidoscopic vision of the struggle between good and evil - and what happens when a group of people has no other choice in life but to survive.

The paper discusses the concept of ‘culture’ and its two forms- ‘low’ and ‘high’ and mainly the focus is on the shift of low culture from a marginalized terrain to the limelight, taking a new name ‘popular culture’. The interdisciplinary nature of Cultural Studies as an academic discipline is confirmed in the background of the slum. It also casts light on how even ‘the second sex’ has come up with an ennobling effect on the society. The pathetically oppressed men of Dharavi have made their entry into the centre stage, holding the hands of their female counterparts as depicted in the docu-fiction. Together, they centralize the concept of popular culture without diminishing the manliness of a man and womanliness of a woman.

Everything that is best in a person or a community constitutes to form what is called culture. Raymond Williams suggests three broad definitions in *Culture and Society*. Culture can be used to refer to “a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic

development”, “a particular way of life, whether of a people, a period or a group” and “the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity” (90). The conceptions regarding culture vary from time to time.

During the modernist era, culture got divided into high culture and low culture, the former associated with the elite such as the aristocracy and intelligentsia and the latter with the marginalised and less educated. However, in the late twentieth century, postmodernism emerged as a movement in arts, architecture and literary criticism. To a great extent, it was a departure from modernism. The wide use of the term ‘postmodernism’ became popular after World War II (1939-1945). Many works of the postmodern age by Samuel Beckett, Vladimir Nabokov, Thomas Pynchon, Roland Barthes and others blend literary genres culturally and stylistically, the tragedy and comedy, that “they resist classification according to traditional literary rubrics” (Abrams 176). Also, considering fragmentation “an exhilarating, liberating phenomenon” (Barry 81), postmodernism exults in it, and believing in excess, it “rejects the distinction between high culture and low culture” (81). So, the conceptual barriers have broken down and as is pointed out by Raymond Williams, high culture – the tradition attributed to the ruling classes and elites – is being replaced in the modern democratic society by an entirely new concept called ‘popular culture’.

The movements, modernism and postmodernism, are understood as cultural projects and the latter possesses both a positive attraction and usefulness to the field of Cultural Studies, which is viewed as a product of postmodern criticism and as the

antithesis of the former. The discipline Cultural Studies deals with the study of culture from a sociological, rather than an aesthetic viewpoint. It asserts that culture is not the abbreviation of ‘high culture’, but ‘popular culture’. ‘Popular’ means ‘of the people’. Popular culture thus usually connotes creative expressions of ordinary people as opposed to those of a society’s elite or educated classes.

In India, Dharavi comes to the forefront of the society as a representative of optimism and liveliness with their stronghold on all elements of culture. Never are they aggressive in their attitudes or behaviour and hence step forward as cultured fellow beings. Shocking the slum tourists who expected to parade poverty, the populace of Dharavi forms a large group reversing the myths regarding slums. Day by day, they prove themselves strong demolishers of the demarcation of culture, thereby enabling themselves to tear off their title as ‘a whole lot of uncultured masses’, certified to them by the rest of the society.

Dharavi’s old and emerging situations of importance are depicted in and the real characters prove how their slum is noted for its exclusivity. The readers are compelled to look beyond the usual filth and garbage they would associate with Dharavi. Instead, a revolution of energy and enterprise could be witnessed.

The common sight of enterprise in both commercial and residential side of Dharavi testifies how determined the backward people are. Their policy sounds like, “This is life; to live you have to work. Dharavi has work, and that is good enough for now” (Bansal & Gandhi 11). Lack of neither privacy nor hygiene or progress troubles them; instead they move on with a never-say-die attitude,

in the “cauldron bubbling with enterprise” (12). Never the people of Dharavi are radical; instead they silently resort themselves to “a revolution of energy and enterprise” (24).

The list of little entrepreneurs of Dharavi include Jameeth Shah, who reached Dharavi from Bihar with a “factory of dreams” (34) and became the owner of Shah Shoes’ Company which makes dancing shoes for celebrities like Priyanka Chopra, Katrina Kaif and others; Mustaqueem from Uttar Pradesh who “put on a brave face, worked all day, long hours” (45) and set up a tailoring factory in Dharavi; Panju Swamy, the owner of a restaurant who craves for a better future for his generation and asserts, “now I understand the value of education. I want my grandsons to study well and do something different” (54); Mustaq Syed, for whom “education had opened our minds like a parachute...” and thus became the co-founder of INMA Enterprise; Faheem and Tauseef, who work as tourist guides and prove through their ‘Be the Local’ (travel and tour agency) that “people here (in Dharavi) are not beggars” (Bansal & Gandhi 67) but have high esteem and assert that, “there is something to learn from us” (67); and Praveen who follows the policy “if you can build your body, you can build your life” because, “if you get a medal at the national level, you can get a government job” (117).

Another great astonishing fact regarding Dharavi is that not only the natives, but also many aristocratic and magnanimous outsiders have come forward with helping hands. Jockin Arputham, who is called the “king among slum activists in the city” (88), along with his companions founded the Bombay Slum Dweller’s

Federation; Dr. Jalindar Adsule, a product of Nirmala Niketan College of Social Work believes that “Dharavi has its own very strong leadership. People who live here know their rights, they are socially and politically aware” (100).

According to Jonathan Culler, “popular culture is a culture of struggle” (43). Throughout the docu-fiction, one could see how the dwellers of the slum, work with strong willpower and determination to achieve their goals. Their life itself is a struggle from birth to death; but they revel in their successes as entrepreneurs.

The residents of Dharavi have fired in themselves the light of aspirations and dreams. They themselves are capable of forming, experiencing and transmitting their own cultural identity. The cultural force which manipulated them was the age-old cultural practices and the downtrodden, oppressed culture itself to which their ancestors stuck on. They strove hard to prove that there is nothing called ‘high culture’, only a culture common to all people, who are in some way or other well-informed through education, awareness programmes etc, now common in Dharavi.

Even in the modern era, there are people who cling on to the Arnoldian concept of ‘high culture’ and thus remaining in their starlit domes. An authority, deaf and dumb to the needs of the weaker section of the society is presented in the fourth section of *Poor Little Rich Slum*, ‘The Future’. The enthusiastic men and women who by themselves have sown the seeds of progress in their minds are deprived of the privileges of a citizen. The government pays no attention to their wishes. Though high-cultured men watch the low-cultured ones progressing themselves their level best, mere words

and never any deed come from their part. Aneerudha Paul, director of Kamla Raheja Vidyanidhi Institute of Architecture and Environmental Studies (KRVIA), who fought for the upliftment of Dharavi from all perspectives, witnessed the indifferent attitude of the government and thus she says, “What we saw was a lot of lip service for the poor, but an intention to free up costly land and hand it over to the private builders. Are we redesigning our cities to merely look good or do we wish to do good?” (Bansal & Gandhi 175-176)

Just like the protagonists of the postmodern novel *Waiting for Godot* -Vladimir and Estragon -by Samuel Beckett, who await the arrival of Godot, the people of Dharavi seem to vainly hope for a favourable plan to be made by the government, so that they can also reach the skies of development with legitimate pride.

Adding more and more to their cultural ambience, the men of Dharavi are distinguished for the equal significance they give to their female counterparts, which in a way contrasts the patriarchal society in the world outside. They soon came to the realisation that their hard work to attain prosperity will be fruitful only with the accompaniment of the entire population, regardless of sexual differences. In short, both masculine and feminine genders of Dharavi have shown their supremacy together in winning the hearts of outsiders and wiping out the disparity between elite/popular culture and in so doing, they stand as the great exemplars in confirming the notions of Cultural Studies.

The most noteworthy example to be pointed out is Hanifabi. To become an earning member and in order to make the both ends

of her family meet, she willingly accepts and faces all challenges that come through her way. Craving for a change in her surroundings, she also chooses social work as a part of her life. Women in her neighbourhood are always supported and helped by her in their needs. The thought of Aashiyana Mahila Mandal which protested the violent atmosphere to which women are fastened to, came to the mind of Hanifabi when she and her companions were prevented from practicing their rights as partners of the society. So, women are taught that silence can never be considered a solution for the violence they are subjected to. Instead of putting any rebellion against their male counterparts, the organisation tries to make a compromise between men and women, in families as well as the society. Likewise, child marriage or marriage even at the age of 14 or 15 (of girls) are prohibited that they are offered an opportunity to continue their educational life. Every mother thinks, “I want a better life for my girls. I do not want their dreams to be crushed like mine” (Bansal & Gandhi 32).

Kishori Project founded by Dr. Duru Shah is meant to make the girl children aware of the bodily changes that would occur, when they reach puberty. Those in schools are provided information in general classes. For those who have dropped out of the school, special sessions are given in which they are free of all bondages.

Dharavi does have a ‘Queen Bee’. Rani Nadar is that much self-confident, hopeful and empowered. She has her daughters going to well-developed educational institutions. Rani has gathered double strength, for she has a supportive life partner, who helps her with

her profitable tailoring centre, 'Rebe Rubi'. Such earning women are, in addition, given loans by the banking industry.

The house Rani lives in is typical Dharavi. One 10x10 feet room with a giant bed. In one corner stands a desktop computer and printer. "We bought it for the girls," says Rani, proudly. "There is Internet connection also ..."

...But she dreams of more...She says, "I want them [daughters] to go out, work, see the world, gain confidence..." (Bansal & Gandhi 72, 74).

The above quoted exemplars confirm that in a world of globalised capitalism, our new woman is a super creature, who has vigorously shattered the glass ceiling. Education and professional careers have offered several opportunities to uplift themselves from the pits of unevenness and inequality. She is free to choose a life she wants thereby fulfilling her wishes.

The 'new woman' who came forward with new ideas of what it meant to be a woman, what she should be allowed to do, say and think, and desire, "is necessarily pro-woman but not entirely anti-man" (Tendon 127).

The "new woman" may not be the 'ideal' or the 'best' woman. She is new in the eyes of the world, being a rebel against the general current of the patriarchal society, and in exploring her true potential, along with the struggle to fulfill her urges and needs. She has carved a position for herself in almost every area. Today, the women's movement has assumed an individualistic nature where women

demand human rights and personal independence, dismissing the depressing socially defined roles.

The willingness of the 'other' to work for themselves and the society has impressed even the societal authority that, many organizations have been set up, for women's betterment. Mahila Women, meaning 'women together', is a credit scheme designed to assist women pavement dwellers in Mumbai. Similar associations include National Maternity Benefit Scheme, International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women and so on.

The broad term 'the advancement of women' could be applied to an unlimited number of areas from basic education to more extreme ideas of equal societal rights. In between come those who make a bursting entry into work forces. Though the idea of women working outside of their homes was by no means new, but the number of women doing so and the variety of employment available make considerable difference in this extraordinary slum. An American author Olive Schreiner writes in her 1911 book *Women and Labour*, "Today we are found everywhere raising our strange new/ Cry – 'Labour and the training that fits us for labour'" (29).

The work under discussion proves that culture is not something to be divided among certain privileged groups of people. The same thing happens with the real people of Dharavi, who have made an unexpected turn of their wheel of fortune, as shown in *Poor Little Rich Slum*. The attributes and effects of culture as described by Matthew Arnold do in no way become part of the attitude and behaviour of the so-called cultured sections of the

society towards the marginalised denizens of the ‘wrong side of the tracks’. Their minds are never static in life, but full of energy, hope and aspirations. They grow from their condition of being the have-nots and become successful entrepreneurs and the owners of an extraordinary and vibrant slum, popular for its distinctiveness.

The residents of Dharavi as depicted in *Poor little Rich Slum* by Rasmi Bansal, Dee Gandhi and Deepak Gandhi, can be raised to the level of Gods for their dedication and strong determination. It is a dynamic collection of individuals who have figured out how to survive in the most adverse circumstances. Not all the slums in Mumbai are like Dharavi. Although many slums are a mixture of communities and religious groups, there are only a few places like Dharavi in Mumbai having such an amazing mix of people. What distinguishes Dharavi from other slums is also its productivity. It is more like an industrial estate than a slum, except that people live and work in the same place. Almost everyone seems to be employed in some kind of work. Many thousands have prospered through a mixture of hard work, some luck and a great deal of mutual dependence. With a factory of dreams in minds and seeds of change all around them, the people of Dharavi tell a story of success thereby abandoning the modernist notion of the elitist/low culture division. Dharavi has thus become postmodern in its appearance and outlook, as it upholds the postmodernist notion of ‘popular culture’, popularised by the field of Cultural Studies.

Cultural Studies allows women warriors simultaneously to acknowledge how social structures variously constrain women like the lower class people and also enable them to envision alternatives.

Women of Dharavi, who crave to outdo the dominating power of men, are not radical in their approaches. They are progressive and conscious of their rights, but quickly compromise to the fact that a woman's real position lies within the family-unit with her male counterpart, which she must restrain and protect and not ignore or neglect due to the false notion of being 'liberated'.

In short, the residents of Dharavi have been capable of warding off the evils of cultural disparity and gender inequality. Together, they are certainly aware of their needs and the methods to be employed for the acquisition of the same.

The authors of the docu-fiction *Poor Little Rich Slum* say that Dharavi is A place where doors are always open. People take care of each other, care for each other. There is no founder, no CEO, but this is an entrepreneurial organization. Dharavi should be celebrated and replicated. Because every human being has the potential to be ignited (Bansal & Gandhi 184).

Thus, the slumdogs of Dharavi have demonstrated what the proponents of *popular culture* have propounded are factual. They are the crownless kings of Mumbai megacity as well as a well-developed and further developing academic discipline of literary endeavour, Cultural Studies.

Works Cited

Abrams, M.H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. New Delhi: Harcourt, 2001. Print

Bansal, Rasmi, Deepak Gandhi and Dee Gandhi. *Poor Little Rich Slum*. Chennai: Westland Ltd, 2012. Print

- Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. New Delhi: Viva Books, 2010. Print
- Culler, Jonathan. *Literary Theory: a Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. Print
- Schreiner, Olive. *Women and Labour*. UK: Echo Library, 1911. Print
- Sharma, Kalpana. *Rediscovering Dharavi: Stories from Asia's Largest Slum*. India: Penguin Books, 2000. Print
- Tabussum, Henna. *Slums in India*. New Delhi: ABD publishers, 2011. Print
- Tendon, Neeru. *Feminism: A Paradigm Shift*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2008. Print
- Williams, Raymond. *Culture and Society*. Great Britain: Doubleday Publishers, 1958. Print.



Dr. Shivaram Karanth's
The Headman of the Little Hill:
A Representation of Tribal Life

N.H.Kallur

Dr Shivaram Karanth is one of the Jnanapeeth awardees of Kannada literature. He was a multifaceted and prolific writer with more than hundred works of different genres. He is one the few Indian writers who have realistically portrayed the plight of tribes and dalits. *The Headman of the Little Hill* is one of the works which represent tribal life. The novel is originally written in Kannada with the title *Kudiyara Kusu* and translated into English by H.Y. Sharadaprasad. The novel accounts the life and problems of a very small tribal group called Kudibis or Kudias living on the Western Ghats of South Canara. Kudibis are aboriginal people living there long before wild cardamom plants attracted the attention of landlords and outsiders. Though they served in cardamom estates, in actual life they were free and independent. As for food they were self supporting. They could catch fish or trap and hunt wild life. They were accustomed to hewing down and burning trees to clear land for the cultivation of paddy. From their landlords they wanted only cloth and salt. The novel graphically portrays their harmonious, peaceful and self supporting life. But with the arrival and interference of the outsiders in their social life the harmony, mutual trust, help, peace, happiness and existence are disturbed.

However, the present article aims to analyse the representation of social, cultural, religious, economic and political life of Kudias as portrayed in *The Headman of the Little Hill*. Before analysing the novel a brief plot of it is provided. The novel begins with the Headman, with his grandson Karia, visiting the temple of Maleraya in the thick forest. He told Karia that he was born there; his ancestors lived there and could not remember why they had left it. The headman had lost his son eight years ago before Karia was born. Recently he lost his daughter-in-law also. There were different opinions regarding her death. Kempri, Tukra's second wife, complained that Tukra had illicit relationship with her, consequently she was carrying. In order to bury the matter he had pushed her into the well and killed. The Headman thought his family God Maleraya had become angry. Hence, in order to appease him he went to Him, offered puja, pleaded to save and bless his grandson. He paid visit to Kukke Subrahmanya also. The Headman thought Kalkuda, the local deity, might have become angry. So he discussed with his people of celebrating fair of Kalkuda. Accordingly Kalkuda's fair was organized; people participated, celebrated the fair with reverence and jubilation and offered sacrifices. Kalkuda spoke through the priest who told about all the happenings in the village. Kudias were, for generations, tenants of hill owners. Ballal were the first owners. Next Bhatta from Vitla was the owner. He was very clever and had the plan of expanding cardamom and rubber plantations. His arrival brought changes in the social, economic and political life of Kudias. However, after sometime the Headman died. As per the custom and command of Kalkuda, Karia became the new headman. As Karia was a small boy Chania, the oldest man, had to discharge headman's

responsibilities. But ambitious Tukra wished to become the headman and trickily sought the support of Bhatta. Bhatta, sidelining the decision of the people, chose Tukra as the headman. People of the Little Hill strongly opposed it and told Bhatta not to interfere in clan's affairs. Bhatta instigated conflicts among Kudias. He gained control and claimed that he was the real master of the hill. He exploited women and blamed the Kudias of theft. The tribe's generations of unity was shaken and people were upset with developments. The matter was brought to Kalkuda. He endorsed the people's decision, asked if the master was greater than him, and told he knew who were the sinners, threatened to punish the guilty, and if people disown him there would be rain of blood. Karia, Thima and Giddi went away to the other hills. In his absence Tukra and Booda, members of Kudias, were declared as headmen of the Big and Little Hills respectively. At Kukkaralli Karia caught an elephant and became famous. He also killed a tiger. This side the Kudias of the Little Hill were made sleepless by a man eater tiger. It killed a woman, a boy and the priest. Bhatta's son, who was the owner of the Little Hill heard about a Kudia's bravery. He sent Booda and Tukra to find out who he was. The Kudia happened to be Karia. Bhatta was impressed by Karia's bravery. Bhatta and Kudias requested Karia to save Kudias from the tiger. Karia went to the Little Hill, with his courage and strategies killed the tiger. Bhatta asked Karia to be headman. It was supported by Kudias, Karia got the blessings of Kalkuda and Maleraya and became the Headman of the Little Hill.

As for the social life of Kudabi's they lived in thatched bamboo huts in small settlements. The settlements were of thirty to

forty huts. These families were patriarchal. Father being the head of family took care of family affairs. During the time of menstruation women stay in separate house. Once when Bhatta was passing by he asked Booda's mother why Kempfi was living in that house. She stated: "Oh, that house: that is where our women sit out during their unclean days" (*The Headman of Little Hill* 55). This exemplifies the male dominance. There was the shortage of girls. Hence, Booda and Thimma remained unmarried for long time. It also connotes preference for male child. Due to shortage of brides, remarriage was permitted. For instance, Booda married Kempfi after she had left her first husband Tukra. Thimma adjusted with Giddi, wife, though he had heard that she was pregnant before marriage due to her stay in Karkal with Braganza, Christian master. Kempfi married Tukra by her own choice and resisted going back to his house as he tried to kill her. Then she married Booda. This episode exemplifies freedom for women in choosing husband. But Giddi's episode implies that there is no choice for women to choose their husbands.

The brave and handsome men had more than one wives, where as ugly ones were without wives. Brave Tukra had married Chinni and Kempfi. After Kempfi had left him he again married a young pretty girl. Brave youths were sought after by parents and girls. Tukra fought with a bear, killed it and protected Chinni. He was honoured in the village; girls envied Chinni for having got such a husband. So Kempfi came from the Big Hill to the Little Hill with some pretexts, followed Tukra, provoked him and married though he was already married. So also, Karia when he was in Kukkaralli killed a tiger, saved a baby elephant from deep mud, tamed it and went to Kukke Subrahmanya riding it. When Kudias were troubled

by a man eater tiger, Karia came to the Little Hill, with strategies and courage he killed it. Because of his bravery Giddi wished her sister should marry Karia. Tukra by that time was an aged man, one of his daughters was of marriageable age, and he wished to marry her off to Karia. Thimma could not get a bride for long time as he had split lips.

Kudiyas lived in harmony helping one another. Whatever “was grown was shared among all their homes” (*HLH* 6). When the Headman lost his daughter-in-law, Booda asked him, along with Karia, to have food at his home. Booda’s mother did not mind cooking food for all of them. When the headman was on the death-bed he asked Booda to take care of his grandson. Accordingly Karia lived with Booda and learnt the skills of hunting from him. When Thimma left the Little Hill with Giddi, Karia went in search of them and found. Due to arrival and interference of Bhatta, outsider, in Kudias’ internal affairs the harmony of them was shattered. Therefore Karia left the hill and lived with Thimma and Giddi in the thick forest and later in Kukkarhalli.

The noteworthy attribute of Kudias was that they esteemed their masters and were faithful to them. Their relationship with masters “was an unspecified relationship: no law had laid down the duties of these men who were not exactly slaves” (11). They were not ambitious, happy with their work and salt and clothes given by the owners. Whoever might be owners Kudias remained faithful to them. For instance, initially the Little Hill was owned by Ballal, then by Bhatta and later by Bhatta’s son. Kudias trusted and revered their masters to such an extent that even if masters cheated them

they remained faithful. For instance, Bhatta cast his eyes on Kempri, felt attracted, followed her, allured her with gold ring and expensive saris and seduced her. Afterwards as Kempri became aged he cast his voluptuous eyes on Giddi also. Once he caught hold of her but she ran away screaming. Giddi told her husband about this. So Thimma attacked Bhatta with arrows consequently he fell down with injuries. Thimma thought that it was the end of his life, instead of telling the truth to his people he ran away from the village. But Bhatta, to save his honour, charged Thimma of stealing gold chain. Later Karia came to know the truth, as the headman instead of disclosing Bhatta's wicked act he too left the village. Thimma and Karia went to Kukkaralli. There they remained faithful to Gowda, master of the village. Bhatta's attempts to use Kudibi women for his sexual desires convey the mindset of haves to misuse and exploit the have-nots and to use women as commodities for use. It seems that Kudias, as subaltern, were voiceless and could not speak. But it seems the writer intends to convey that it is the responsibility of masters to retain the good faith of their servants.

The most significant aspect of religious life of Kudias was that they were God fearing people. They strongly believed and had faith in deities, spirits, Gods and hierarchy of Gods. For them Subrahmanya was the supreme God, Maleraya was their clan God and Kalkuda was the local deity. Kalkuda was believed to speak through the priest. Once Kalkuda burst out, "those who disown me will vomit blood and die" (*HLH* 63). They found God in every element of nature. Kudias regarded "fire as an expression of the anger of the forest spirits. They believed that every mountain, every peak and every great stone or tree had a spirit of its own. Nature

was not a friend but a lord” (84). The Headman, with Karia, went to Maleraya’s cave in the thick forest. The headman thought that due to Maleraya’s anger he had lost his son and daughter-in-law. Hence, with difficulty and risk he came to this place to appease Him. He offered puja from quite distance because due to death unclean days were not yet over. He went to Subramanya also. Karia was excited to see temple elephants and dreamed of taming an elephant and coming to Subramanya riding it. On the way the headman thought of holding Kalkuda’s fair, the local deity.

Kalkuda was the powerful deity of both the Little Hill and the Big Hill. Kudias believed that He spoke through priest. Whatever he said was reverentially believed, taken seriously and followed. Violation of his words would lead to disasters in family and village. For them Kalkuda’s temple was the court, He was the judge and His judgement was final. Hence, there was no scope for appeal. No courts but Gods and spirits tried people here. Kalkuda’s fair was arranged on auspicious days. On the festival day people got up early, bathed, and arrived at the temple with flowers to offer. They offered hens, roosters and hogs as sacrifices to Kalkuda. The headman’s sacrifice had to be the biggest of all. The priest took ritual bath, wore white dhoti and deep red shawl. As he worshipped, Kalkuda took possession of priest and utters words. For instance, when the aged headman was in dilemma of nominating the headman Kalkuda said: “Bring up your grandson who shall take over from you” (26). When the headman was on the deathbed he told Karia, : “Child, be true to God” (45).

When Bhatta told Kudias to leave the village Thimma said whoever may be the master, the hill belonged to Kudias. Maleraya, the Lord of the hills, had given it as gift to his children. Nobody could drive them away. When the matter was referred to Kalkuda, he roared: “These hills are mine. They have been mine since the beginning of time. If you don’t want me, tell me and I will go. When I go I will rain a rain of blood. The dead man’s grandson shall be the headman. None else may usurp his right” (*HLH* 59). When Tukra came forward to offer flowers Kalkuda did not accept it. He asked him who he was. Bhatta charged that the cardamom yielding was less, there were no signs of insects’ affliction, he found nail marks on branches, some plants were filled with seeds and some were empty. So he blamed that somebody from the village might have stolen. The oldest man of the Little Hill Chania felt “the good name of the tribe was at stake. He branded us thieves and had houses searched. We who have lived in these hills for generations have never heard such a charge. It is for us to prove ourselves innocent” (63). They felt offended and searched for cardamom in every hut. They did not find in any hut. Bhatta also charged that his gold chain was missing on the same day when Thimma disappeared from the village and he might have stolen it. Grieved Kudias referred the matter to Kalkuda. He remarked’ “if the chain had been stolen at all, the thief was not from among the Kudias” (123). Regarding disappearance of Thimma and Giddi the priest told Karia “his friends were alive, they were in fear,, they were in the east and they would come one day”. Once on the feast Karia, the headman, appealed to Kalakuda: “there is one thing deity that you will have to solve. There is an accusation on our head. Gold has been stolen from our

master's house. Tell us who are thieves, punish them without mercy and save our honour" (131). Kalkuda said "Let the loser come and tell me. I will answer him. Is the deity too small for you master? None of my children has done it" (132). Tukra had told Bhatta what Kalkuda had said. Bhatta did not dare to approach Kalkuda, instead he told that he had found it at his home in Vitla. Thus it was proved that Thimma had not theft. Kalkuda's words proved right.

Kempi, wife of Booda, was jealous of Giddi's beauty. She thought she was her rival in the village. So, she planned to make Giddi run away from the village. As the part of it she had poisoned the food and put chameleon in rice at Thimma's house. Consequently the child died in her womb. Thimma was worried and planned to quit the village. On one occasion Kalkuda enlisted the evil works done by Kudias. He said he knew who had done all those wicked works. Kempri came to know it, experienced guilty consciousness, suffered from some ills and died confessing her evil deeds. Bhatta who alleged Thimma, for personal reasons, of stealing gold chain was also paralysed and died. Thus, the wicked people paid for their deeds and faith and faithfulness of Kudias were strengthened and perpetuated.

Kudias belonged to single community or sect. With the arrival of the outsiders there was a threat to their religious homogeneity. In spite of it they were able to resist it. Braganza, the master of the Big Hill, was a Christian. He told Kudias about Christian values, kindness and miracles of Jesus. He felt "why should not these people give up Kalkuda, Panjurli and Kalkutiga and follow the Cross" (*HLH* 85)? He attempted to convert them also. As a measure in this regard he

took Choma's daughter Giddi and her brother to Karkal. He christened them anew, "Giddi became Pauline and her brother Paul" (89). He brought changes in their tastes, dress style and they started wearing cross in their necks. Kudias' priest threatened that the whole clan of Kudias would be ruined by what his children had done. Choma's and his wife sorrow knew no bound. Choma went to Karkal. When Braganza was not in town he brought his children back to the Little Hill. The matter was referred to Kalkuda, local deity, he forgave their sins. Choma was, with support of clan, successful in freeing his children from the hold of Braganza and Christianity. When Braganza attempted to come back to the village, his house and church were burnt and his followers were chased back. Thus Kudias strongly resisted the influence of other religions. It connotes that the writer wishes tribes to retain their heritage.

Economic life of Kudias is not much advanced. They adopted shifting cultivation. After rainy season every year a different patch of land was cleared, cultivated, and sown and "they never raised a second crop where they took the first" (*HLH* 6). Paddy was the common food grain and they maintained cardamom groves also. Once the rain started the tracks would become impassable, so "before the rains broke every year the Kudias built huts near the community rice field" (6). Kudias were hardworking people they "did not waste time talking of the previous day's tragedy... come sorrow, come death, the land must be tilled and the crop tended" (6). The Kudias worked as the tenants of masters of the hills and served for some months in a year without any wages. Gruel, roots, leafy vegetables, crabs, fish and hunted animals were part of their food. The meat of hunted animals was shared. Both men and women

were good at hunting. They mainly used arrows and slings for hunting animals and birds and protecting themselves from wild animals. Considering the economic life, Kudias need to be brought to mainstream by extending government's welfare and development schemes to them.

As far as the political life of Kudias is concerned, they are not aware of and influenced by present political happenings. The Headman was the chief who looked after and took care of things in the village. He settled most of the cases and solved the problems at his level. Serious sort of cases were taken to the priest and Kalkuda. The position of headman was hereditary. After the death of the headman people assembled at Chania's hut and chose Karia, grandson, as the headman of the Little Hill. As Karia was a small boy, it was decided Chania to shoulder responsibilities of headman until Karia became major. All approved it but Bhatta opposed it as he wanted to choose Tukra. He told to undo and settle the matter anew. Chania said: "ours was a meeting of the clan. It took place in accordance with time-honoured custom. No outsider may have a say there" (50). Bhatta became angry, ordered to accept his selection or to quit the hill. Kudias did not accept it. Chania said: "Bhatta might be master over the garden, but not over the clan, he had no right to interfere in clan customs" (48). Even Thimma also opposed it openly and exploded: "Master, if you are in the right, I do not mind your spitting in my face...you must not interfere in clan affair. Marriage or funeral, punishment, or expulsion, we have our own rules" (52). Kudias are far away from obtaining formal education. But there is no dearth of life values in them. As education is a key to

bring them to the mainstream educational facilities need to be reached out to them.

However, their life was being influenced by changes occurred in the world. As time changed, “they came to love beads, bangles and other knick-knacks sold by pedlars at the fair. They would take honey and soapnut from their huts and bring bits of glass or black beads or iron bangles” (11). After Bhatta’s arrival they had seen gun. He let some of the young enthusiasts learn to use the gun. He often told them: “throw your bows and arrows into the fire” (12). From Bhatta they learnt the use of kerosene and systematic cultivation of cardamom. The novel throws light on various aspects of Kudias’ life. The writer wishes to foreground and romanticize the values which Kudias upheld. Karia’s return to the Little Hill connotes preservation and continuation of tribal culture. No doubt Kudias are affected by outsiders and outside happenings, but they resist them strongly. However, the main issue of how to bring them to the mainstream retaining their heritage remains unsolved.

Works Cited

Karant, K. Shivaram (Translator; H.Y. Sharadaprasad). *The Headman of the Little Hill*. Bangalore: IBH Prakashana, 1979.

Richard III : Disability in Shakespearean Body

J.S. Jahangir

In August 2012, a team of archeologists from the University of Leicester, uncovered a crude grave hidden in an unassuming plot. The site, long ago in the medieval times was Grey Friars friary. It is now served as a parking lot for Leicester City Council Social Services and, to much excitement; the long lost burial place belongs to England's one of the most controversial Monarchs: King Richard III. By February 2013, scientist had identified with supposed identity via technologically advanced mitochondrial DNA testing that the buried remains were of Richard III (Burnes). Since after the identification of Richard III's body, historians, literary scholars, fans and detractors alike have challenged the accuracy of this discovery and its impact on knowledge that has surrounded a King traditionally deemed a cruel ruler, "determined to prove a villain/and hate the idle pleasures of these days"(Shakespeare 1). Four years later, on 25 March 2016, Archbishop of Canterbury, The Most Rev Justin Welby, presided over the service of the reburial of Richard III and Actor Benedict Cumberbatch, a distant relation of the king, read a poem by Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy.

It is quite interesting that long after his death and during the recent time of his resurrection, Richard III's body takes the centre stage. Renaissance writers and historians from Thomas More to Edward Hall and Holinshed to Shakespeare were obsessed over Richard's physical shape. To the credit of latest Ricardian news, there is a detailed and painstaking description of Richards's skeletal remains that elaborates his habitus. I sketch some records:

The skeleton is in good condition apart from the feet, which are missing as a result of later disturbance. . . He had severe idiopathic adolescent scoliosis. . . Unaffected by scoliosis, he would have stood around 5ft8in (1.73m) tall, above average height of a medieval man, though his apparent height may be decreased as he grew older and his disability may have lifted his right shoulder higher than his left. (Buckley 536)

Marjorie Garber claims that Richard's deformity is "transmitted not genetically but generically through historiography and dramaturgy" (69). He further comments that Shakespeare "was himself shaping the facts of Richard's physiognomy and character for political purposes or he was taken in by Tudor revisionist desire to inscribe a Richard 'shap'd' and 'stamp'd' for villainy" (64).

In William Shakespeare's play *Richard III*, the body of the king has always been at stake. The play, which features a protagonist with a famously distinctive body, charts Richard's rise to power and his brief tenure as king. Throughout the play, characters discuss and describe Richard's body in a number of ways: Richard describes himself as "cheated of feature" (7), "deformed, unfinished; (7)" Anne and Elizabeth deride him as "thou lump of foul deformity (19)", "thou

dreadful minister of hell(19)", "hedgehog(21)", "bottled spider(45)", and "poisonous bunch-backed toad(45)", terms which all link insult to anomalous and inhuman body.

The distinguishing feature of Richard is his self-consciousness of his own status as disabled, and this contribution of self-consciousness adds numerous key tenets. First and very firm, Richard establishes that people with disability will become self-conscious naturally. Second, Richard emblemizes the capacity to question and to manipulate the misleading representation of disability by which the disabled people are put at violence and social exclusion. He exposes the falsehood and superstitions by which religion, moral and social institution represent disabled people as inferior to the non-disabled persons. Shakespeare's likely motivation for portraying Richard as a "demonic cripple" was to support and perpetuate the negative view of Richard and the Plantagenet line which was held by then current monarch, Queen Elizabeth I. The first historical descriptions characterizing Richard in such a manner may be attributed to Elizabethan devotee Sir Thomas More in 1513.

I would like to argue that in both the English Renaissance and now, it has been of utmost importance that Richard's disability be representational, not literal, in order to, as Stephen Greenblat suggests, "heighten dramatic effect and to intensify the political, psychological, and metaphysical dimensions of Shakespeare's villainous anti hero"(508). The discovery of Richard's spinal deformity has encouraged reading his impairment. As Robert McRuer explains, "Richard III is one of the two most despised characters in literature. The distaste for Richard in disability studies is not

particularly difficult to comprehend, given the ways in which the monstrous body logically explains his logical deeds. His deformity is in other words, is causally connected to his evil machinations” (McRuer 295).

Richard III is the original site of stigma in English literature, beginning with the Tudor chroniclers who decried his villainy alongside his deformity. Richard was also Shakespeare’s first study of stigma, and his most meticulous, stretched across three plays. In *Richard III*, Shakespeare outdid himself by deepening his study of stigma, Richard becoming a perverse narcissist who takes pleasure in the image of his own deformity who tries to transform the very meaning of that deformity. In this play, it delights Richard to descant upon his deformity as he dissembles its meaning. Usually, he does so by shifting attention from his body to his face and clothes.

David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder read Richard as a character who is given a “misshapen” form by nature, and they accord him agency through manipulation of the meanings of his form. Although they reject critical conceptions that read deformity as malignant motivation or moral failing, they nonetheless take Richard’s physical anomalies as the site of disability in the play: “Richard’s character fashions disability, then, as a full-blown narrative device that accrues force for his own machinations. He sets to work performing deformity” (103).¹ While Mitchell and Snyder describe Richard’s deformity as disability, they also differentiate the kind of early modern disability Richard displays from contemporary discourses of disability. Positioning the play at the “threshold” of scientific attention to disabled bodies in the eighteenth century, they

describe the play as “a Renaissance version of late medieval attitudes toward deformity” (102). Their focus attempts both to preserve “disability” as an identity category that occurs later than the early modern period and to provide a trans-historical account of its emergence as identity. However, the oscillation of “disability” (Richard’s deformity is disability, yet his character is not quite “disabled” in the contemporary sense) remains unclear about the contours of Renaissance disability and the variety of representations of distinctive bodies in the period.

In disability theory, Richard’s character is often taken up as Shakespeare’s clearest foregrounding and interpreting of physical difference. Here, I want to examine Richard’s place in the accounts of disability studies to explore how his characterization in the play can expand current notions of “disability” in the Renaissance. Attention to the play in disability studies has made two key critical moves: critics conflate “disability” with the language of “deformity,” which Richard himself deploys in the play to describe his distinctive body, and thus fail to distinguish between the plethora of characterizations of his body. At the same time, critics read Richard’s relation to his body through the lens of a pre-modern notion of disability that construes bodily deformity as the visible sign of moral evil. Resulting readings of Richard thus highlight his place in a trans-historical narrative of disability yet limit their claims about disability in the early modern period. This critical tendency results in “disability” signifying bodily impairment and not a more complex relationship between Richard’s body and his audience within and outside the play.

Shakespeare also employs Richard's physical condition to explore the idea of isolation. Richard's physical condition as compared with other characters is visually distinctive offering a clear demarcation of normality and abnormality. Socially too, Richard is clearly isolated as he offers in his first soliloquy, confiding that "But I, am not shaped for sportive tricks/Nor made to court an amorous looking glass. . . .And that so lamely and unfashionable/That dogs bark at me as I halt by them" (Richard III 1.1.15-16 and 23-24). This separation from society is described by Richard as having forced upon him by his physical condition, and implies that it is a consequence over which he has no control. He adds that even animals are alarmed as he passes emphasizing the monstrous nature of his appearance as markedly inhuman. This is also important because it implies that he is unable to form solidarity or companionship with any creature – human or otherwise. This theme is reemphasized in the wooing scene between Richard and Anne when she declares "Villain, thou knowst' not law of God nor man./No beast so fierce but knows some touch of pity." Several times in the play Richard is described in animalistic terms, as a hedgehog, and a toad. But the assertion that Richard is not even on the level of an animal, but rather is spurned even by animals, and does not even have the endearing qualities of an animal demonstrates how completely ostracized Richard has become. The sense of separation or not belonging is palpable "for Shakespeare's characters with disabilities or deformities. . . they were separated with an added dimension from other characters not lacking disabilities."

This social isolation to which he has been relegated by fate defines our reading of Richard and his motivations. His lack of

personal relations and interconnectedness is an important feature of his identity. Shakespeare frequently explored issues of identity and humanity in his plays like *King Lear* and *The Tempest*, in which characters like Lear and Prospero withdrew socially, only to be redeemed by their relations with others. He does not offer that remedy for the character of Richard. Richard is keenly aware of his separation from others, and this is especially clear in Act 5, Scene 3 when he is visited by the Ghost of his wife Anne. He bemoans this lack of fellowship and communion crying out “I shall despair. There is no creature loves me;/And if I die, no soul will pity me” (5.3.201-202). He states simply that there is no one to whom he feels allegiance or love for but himself, stating, “Richard loves Richard; that is, I and I” (5.3.184).

Richard’s employment of his deformed body to distract from political maneuvers and project imaginary social behavior culminates in the bid for power he puts forth before his aristocratic rivals. To dispatch Hastings and secure the support of the nobles, Richard again draws attention to his body, telling his audience what to see and, crucially, what the sight should mean: “Then be your eyes the witness of their evil / Look how I am bewitched! Behold mine arm / Is like a blasted sapling withered up” (3.4.67-69). Using his arm as proof, Richard marshals the visible resources of his body for his pursuit of power. Thus, even as Richard manipulates the meanings of deformity that spins around him, we must not lose sight of the complex relation between his distinctive body and power.

Perhaps one of the most stimulating mechanisms of the nature of Richard is the paradoxical arrangement of self determination and

predetermination. Shakespeare produces a fictionalized account of a historical episode, which entails a predefined conclusion, one that must take into account the penchants of the current power structure (Queen Elizabeth I). Shakespeare also recognized the need to provide an ending in which misdeeds were punished and injustices rectified. He also needed to create a character and resolution for that character which was supported by cultural beliefs. However Shakespeare's creation of Richard III challenged the notions of control over one's fate. He created Richard as a disabled figure who refused to have his actions or identity defined solely by his physicality. A character, who though disabled demonstrated remarkable strength and ability both in the political arena, and also on the battlefield, stirs emotions audiences which are unsettling.

Disability studies is ready to seize upon Richard as a central figure in Renaissance notions of distinguishing bodies since Richard's importance is on his deformed body and the multiple bodies that he shifts in the due course of the play. Richard's character in the path of disabled identity offers to Shakespeare studies a wealthy prospect for novel understanding of *Richard III* as a play about the power of the deformed body. The play has the potential to open up new possibilities for thinking disability in the Renaissance.

Works Cited

Burns, John F. "Discovery of Skeleton Puts Richard III in Battle Once Again." The New York Times. 23 Sept 2012. Web. Accessed 10/8/2016. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/24/world/europe/discovery-of-skeleton-puts-richard-iii-in-battle-again.html?_r=0.

- Garber, Marjorie. *Shakespeare's Ghost Writers: Literature as Uncanny Causality*. New York and London: Routledge, 1997. Print.
- Greenblatt, Stephen, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus, ed. *The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1997. 2nd edition. Print.
- McRuer, Robert. *Desiring Disability: Queer Theory Meets Disability Studies*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003. Print.
- Mitchell, David T., and Sharon L. Snyder. *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000. Print.
- . *Cultural Locations of Disability*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006. Print.
- Shakespeare, William. *Richard III*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Print.

The Kid Lit Extravaganza: The Recent Trends in Children's Literature

Anusha Das

Children's books should be interesting and have relevance for the intended audience. Today more books are published for children than ever before, and authors and illustrators are pushing creativity beyond what has been comfortable. Children's books are written with current view of childhood in mind and include topics that authors perceive as relevant to them. Two significant phenomena have dramatically altered the course and pace of Children's literature. First, the child audience has gained significantly in stature compared with earlier times, where the only reading material for children was borrowed from adults. Second, technology has advanced the possibilities for illustration and, with the internet, redefined what a book is.

Unlike earlier periods in history, children's divisions are often the most successful parts of publishing institutions. Newspapers and magazines also tend to provide as much coverage-reviewing and promoting- of children's books as they do adult books. While the whole- language movement of the late 1990s and early 2000s,

children's literature assumed a major role in the classroom. The whole- language approach promoted the use of children's literature for all literacy instruction, thus requiring an extensive inventory of books in the classroom in order to meet the needs of all students. However, as this movement came under attack, the focus shifted to a reliance primarily on core reading programs for the majority of instruction. Today's classrooms have libraries for students' independent reading and core reading program anthologies and levelled text for instruction.

Since the evolution of children's literature, several books have come to be considered classics. E.B. White's *Charlotte's Web*, C.S Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* and Ezra Jack Keats's *The Snowy Day* are certainly among this group. *Charlotte's Web* allowed the reader to understand about characters and the nuanced relationships among them. *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* engaged children in fantasy where a wardrobe was the border between fantasy and reality. *Where the Wild Things Are* is an adventure where the young boy is in charge of all the events. Finally, in *The Snowy Day*, the central character, a young Black child, engages in a typical day playing with snow.

Current Children's literature is more than just an extension of what has been written or illustrated previously. Each new book is just a bit more creative than the last, with authors and illustrators always pushing the limits of what were. Building on this idea, several new trends are evident in today's children's book.

Early picture story books often presented text and illustrations that supported one another and told one story, newer versions may have text that is in conflict with illustrations. Because of technological advancements in colour reproduction, illustrators are making greater use of colour. They are also using computer generated art. Current writers are including sensitive topics such as death, divorce and alcoholism, previously considered inappropriate, in their narrative books. For many books, it is easy to identify the genre, whether it is a fantasy, a mystery or other. However, some current books are less identifiable because the authors are incorporating multiple genres within. Although many books continue to feature Caucasian characters, more and more are including children and adults of colour and from other cultures, such as Asian American, Native American, Amish and Jewish. Along these lines, awards are also being endowed to honour distinguished minority writers and illustrators. From baby board books onward, there has been an explosion in quality informational text. Books are simultaneously entertaining children and teaching them about presidents, dinosaurs, planets, natural disorders and world wars. They are bringing to life sports heroes and war heroes, artists and musicians. Books are available on virtually every real- life topic. Increasingly books from other countries are being translated and offered to children in their own mother tongue. Books that include comic-like graphics and text are rapidly entering the market place. More children's books, unfortunately many written by celebrities, are intending to deliver heavy-handed messages. The *Harry Potter* series is probably the most vivid example of the popular book series, with children and adults clamoring to read the next newest written by J.K. Rowling. So successful was this format

that millions of copies of each book in the series were sold even before publication. The marketplace determined a new category of consumers of books: tweens, which include children in the 8-12 year age range. Many children's books have internet connections, where the content of the book is expanded through games and other extensions. The websites allows readers to play the game, collect clue cards, and potentially win prizes. Many websites offer books that are available for reading on the internet only. Readers can turn pages with a click to read text, view images (often animated), and hear sounds.

Although the preceding list includes many positive changes in children's literature there are some worries also about today's market: will the new digital technologies dull children's senses so that they no longer are capable of being reflective or engaging in prolonged reading events? With children being increasingly seen as consumers, will literature be produced solely to encourage their buying without regard for quality and craft? With the new dominance of design, will images become more salient than words? We can find that today's children do not read as their parents or grandparents did. Likewise, books are no longer viewed as "sacred" commodities. Children are not as literate as their parents were in the domain of literature, but their parents are also not as literate in the new technologies that are pivotal for their children's acquiring a distinct and distinguished habit under present cultural and economic conditions. If children are being reconfigured to act s savvy consumers and supporters of globalized capitalism, alphabetic literature is incidental to their major interests. Books and related paraphernalia, such as CD's, DVD's, games, stuffed animals and

other gimmicks were strategically placed in book shops and displayed to maximize their selling potential among young consumers.

Other significant transformations in children's literature include the changing nature of publishing and marketing. The 1980's were volatile years for publishing houses, with numerous mergers and corporate takeovers. There are few independent publishing houses still in existence. The end result is that fewer individuals decide what children's books might be published. Smaller houses that may have taken risks with new writers or illustrators just don't exist anymore.

Simultaneous with the changes in the publishing industry were adjustments in the market place. Schools, libraries and big booksellers (eg: Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Borders) now purchase most children's books. Because these entities buy in large quantities, they are able to do so at lower prices, making it more difficult for small book sellers to compete and succeed. Schools and libraries also tailor their purchases to more closely match the academic curricula. As an example, schools and libraries have increased their purchases of historical fiction that matches their social studies curriculum content, bypassing other historical novels that do not. Additionally, because of their limited budgets, they do not purchase books that might be considered risky. Large bookstores and Internet sellers purchase books they believe will sell, books they believe will be appealing to adults, the buyers and to children. They typically buy reprints or new editions of favourite books, movie or TV tie-ins, and books that come in series.

Today's authors appear to believe that children are more sophisticated than before, especially with the influence of the Internet,

and thus create more complex picture-books, novels and informational text. Let us hope then that our authors, illustrators, and publishers continue to follow some trends and eschew others as we strive to create and discover the best possible literature for our children.

The emergence of new media has influenced the forms, formats and narrative techniques of writing for children. Children's stories have been adapted for film and television, written to be read on radio, recorded on audio tape and CD's and been conceived as CD-ROM's, electronic and online fictions. Each new medium has had its impact on how stories are written, how and where they are encountered, and even what it means to read. Those who work in the area of children's literature have broadened their interests to take account of all formats in which young people encounter narratives, whether on the page, on screens, on the stage, in lyrics, from oral sources, or any other medium or vehicle.

Like the concept of childhood, children's literature is very much a cultural construct that continues to evolve over time. The recent years have seen a dramatic change in the status of children's literature- from just being the concern of a few brave individuals; it has become the focus of countless courses, conferences and works of scholarship. Despite the recent trend of categorizing children's literature by age, an increasing number of adults have begun reading children's books, blurring the boundaries between children's and adult texts. J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series, begun with *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (1997), has been a huge success with both child and adult readers. As children's literature has become

an increasingly financially profitable business, more successful writers who have first established themselves as writers for adults, are opting to write for children. A new interest has arisen in the field of children's literature and efforts are being made to raise new questions regarding the society's changing concepts of childhood. These questions are responsible for different texts for the child in different periods. Let us hope that the writers of children's literature will strive to open new and fruitful directions in the field of children's literature.

Works Cited

- Berk, Laura E. *Child Development*. Delhi: Pearson Education Inc, 2003.
- Cass, Joan E. *Literature and Young Child*. London: Longmans, 1967.
- Hunt, Peter. *Children s Literature*. USA: Blackwell Publishers Inc, 2001.
- Lesnik-Oberstein, Karin. *Children s Literature: New Approaches*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.
- Onakkoor, George. *The Children s Literature*. Thiruvananthapuram: The State Institute of Children s Literature, 1990.
- Reynolds, Kimberley. *Children s Literature: A Very Short Introduction*. USA: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Travers, Barbara E. and John F. Travers. *Children s Literature: A Developmental Perspective*. USA: John Wiley & Sons Inc, 2008.
- Williams III, Gurney and Joan I. Glazer. *Introduction to Childrens Literature*. New York: McGraw-Hill Inc, 1979.

Live(d) Tribal Oratures: A Case Study of Muduvan Community

Jerome K. Jose

Academic research shows that in India, along with regional written languages, there are many tribal, folk and subaltern dialects and languages which are on the verge of extinction mainly due to the fact that academic attention and importance have not been given to such dialects and languages which exist in oral forms. Muduvans are one such community who have umpteen rich and varied literatures of their own which are transferred orally. They are one of the oldest tribal communities of south India, living on the summits of the Western Ghats, largely in the bordering regions of Kerala and Tamil Nadu. Since they live in such a location or bioregion their dialects have apparent similarities with Malayalam and Tamil, the prominent languages of Kerala and Tamil Nadu respectively. Live/ stay with Muduvan community is the best option to experience their culture and tradition and also of listening to their rich oratures performed at various occasions of their daily life. Hence the oratures selected for this paper are few among more than hundred of oral pieces (stories, songs, riddles etc.) collected directly from the field in person. It would be appropriate to point out the amount of research work

and studies done by scholars like Edgar Thurston, Krishna Iyer, Nettur P. Damodaran, M.V. Vishnunamboothiri, C. K. Karunakaran and others in the field of anthropology and sociology in a conventional way. But their rich oratures have not been studied much. Hence this paper is an endeavor to understand and locate Muduvan community via the predominantly existing oratures.

Oral art forms can be considered as the pulse or basis of knowledge of any community, especially of folk and tribal who have no written forms, since their oratures exhibit, in a crystallized form, all the vicissitudes of their culture and colourful mosaic of their life. Robert Kellogg in his article "Oral Literature" states, "Oral literature is characterized by formulaic language, stock scenes, repetitions of themes and motifs, set runs and refrains, standard topoi and metaphors; but surpassing all of these formal characteristics in significance is the fact that the 'work' exists only as it is embodied in performance, is created anew each time it is heard, and therefore has 'author.'"(57). Another scholar Ruth Finnagan in the beginning of the article "How Oral is Oral Literature" says, "Literature is inevitably oral where all literary production, performance, and consumption-indeed all communication-is fully oral and there is a total absence of literacy" (52). Later she states "oral literary forms can also exist in conditions marked by marginal or even full literacy, and that some coexistence and often interaction with written literature" (59). She talks about four criteria to differentiate a piece of literature as oral or not. They are mode of composition, mode of transmission, actualization in performance, and sources. She has the opinion that the criterion of actualization in performance is the straightforward one. (60-62).

Oral tradition plays a main role in folklore. Folklore is the collective memory of a social group in historical times transmitted from one generation to the other through words, songs and any other form of communication. W.J. Thomas coined the term 'Folklore' in 1846 to denote popular antiquities such as songs, proverbs, tales and beliefs. The famous American folklorist Mr. William R. Bascon considers folklore as 'verbal art'(245) in his article 'Verbal Art' and he says that folk literature including legends, myths, proverbs, songs and folk tales are in verbal art. In folk culture, oral tradition not only codifies the thought and feelings but also endows them with meaning and imaginary ideas.

According to Chitrasen Pasayat, "Cultural tradition of a tribe is a self-contained whole, whereas the folk tradition is essentially a part- a substructure- in the true sense of the word. The folk tradition continually interacts with the elite tradition."(2). In order to demarcate the folklore of tribal societies, scholars can use the term or concept 'tribal lore'. Tribal societies have definite and strong social structure, family pattern and relationship, customs and rituals. The tribal people who live mostly in the hills and forests do not have much contact outside their world and that is one of the reasons why they can preserve their culture and tradition without much changes. The same does not happen mostly with folk culture due to interaction with other social groups and often they are considered as 'sub-culture'. Nityanand Patnaik says:

The tribal folk literature is largely an artistic expression of tribal thought, emotions, feelings, happy moments of dancing, hunting, merry making, and also sorrowful memories connected with

frustration, crop failure, distress and disappointments. In most cases it is available in spoken language and not in any written form. (7-8)

In Malayalam and in Tamil the word 'Muduvan' means those who carry something on their back. Muduvan women never keep their babies in cradles but they have the custom of carrying their children on their back or 'Muthuku' ('Muthuku' means 'the back' or 'shoulder'), a practice not common among other tribes. They have a beautiful story narrating how they started carrying their children on their back and how they got the name 'Muduvan'. The gist of the story told by Mattu Thatha (a seventy year old Muduvan of Susani Kudy) goes like this:

In the thick dark forest there was a banyan tree standing near a stream. Babies were put in cradles made up of thick sheet carved out of tree barks. Roots of banyan tree held the cradles and babies up from the soil. One day a mother put her baby in cradle and went to forest. When she came back after collecting honey and fruits, he was killed by a tiger. After that incident, to overcome this problem, they found out a new strategy of carrying their children on their back.

The composition, transmission, and performance of Muduvan's stories, songs and other oral forms take place in a place called 'Chavadi'. It is a separate, larger building attached to their settlement. Their stories are effective conduits through which they transfer their culture, values and ideas. Muduvans do not believe themselves to be genuinely indigenous to the hills. About the origin of the name Muduvan and their migration, the tribe has maintained several stories orally transmitted from generation to generation. On

account of the legend handed down from father to son is that they originally hailed from Madurai, in Tamil Nadu plains. Many of these stories are related to Kannaki (goddess). Some of their stories tell that political conflicts and internal struggles of Pandya Kings forced them to leave Madurai and to reach High Range. The whole process of migration and settlement in the new forest habitat shows the adaptation of Muduvans in the course of time. When Muduvans settled in the High Ranges, they became forest dwelling hill people adapted to the new environment. The relation and partnership with nature is reflected in many of their stories. Their stories narrate how they lived/live in the forest by collecting food items like wild fruits and roots. One such wild root is 'Mullavalli Kengu'. They have a beautiful mythical story related to this particular root. Mattu Thatha says: god Murugan's wife, Valli, took human form and was born in a place where the particular root 'mullavalli kengu' was uprooted by a deer. When Valli was old enough to get married, Murugan came in different forms and at last he could marry her in the form of an old man.

The cultural heritage of the Muduvans is transmitted through their songs which play a vital role in their orations along with stories. Closeness to life, friendship between human beings, cultural togetherness, relationship with human beings and nature, and such aspects of life are all reflected in their songs. Their songs are more situational and contextual. They sing songs in many life occasions; at the time of marriage, religious rituals, working place, occasions of death etc. The songs sung by the Muduvans are clear indication of their cultural wisdom and a close examination of the selected few in different life contexts are quite interesting. One genre of their

song is 'ʔsha-Pʔttu'(love song), sing mainly at the time of marriage. When the bridegroom approaches her house, the girl is hidden by her friends in the forest. The girl along with her friends start singing songs and bridegroom sings counter songs. For example:

(Girl Sings)

See the hillocks,
Deer on the pretty rocks.
Down here in the valley,
The buds so lovely.
Bring flowers that are colourful,
To make my hair beautiful.

(Boy Sings)

On the rocky cliff,
You stood with the calf,
Like the cloudy sky.
You were indeed a black beauty.

The process of singing songs and counter songs lasts till the bridegroom finds the bride and present a bamboo comb. These songs are mostly in the form of dialogue. One another example is:

(Boy Sings)

Oh, beautiful lady in the field,
You carry pots of honey or mango?

(Girl Sings)

See, I don't have pots of honey.

See, I don't have pots of mango.

But I have two pots of milk,

For my man, so strong.

Another genre of folk song that the Muduvans have is the lullaby. The lullaby is the first genre of folksong encounter by the child. The function of lulling the child to sleep is realized through the rhythmic pattern of the lines of the song, directed towards calming the child. Muduvan women sing lullaby to their children while they put their children to sleep or when they get free time and pours out her love for her child spontaneously. A line by line paraphrased meaning of a lullaby goes like this:

The child is the son of Shiva or Krishna. He looks beautiful while sleeping in the thick. The sweet baby is shining like a gem. Is he the son of lotus or the son of a king? The child is like fresh honey or like a beautiful mango. The child is like cup of honey so innocent and like a gem. The child is like honey on the rock or like a sprouting mango. The child is like a light from space and is so beautiful. The child is like a distant light or a shining gem. He comes like a lion by riding the chariot of crescent moon.

The above mentioned songs show that most of the songs of Muduvans are related to their real life situations. Their songs are distinguished by the use of images, metaphors, similes and such figures of speech which are related to nature and natural phenomena. The figures of speech in Muduvan's songs serve a fine purpose to express their emotion. Very often in Muduvan's love songs im-

ages and metaphors are the main body of content like "The man here comes as black as the rainy cloud", "Oh, pumpkin flower, You blossomed with a beauty", "want to comb her tress with the honey kiss", "Ox, you ox/ Peacock colour ox", "Over the hills, I see you with the flock of your cattle.", "On the rocky cliff, You a black monkey" etc. Their language did not develop in a mechanically pure form, without the contamination of emotion. What they perceived and experienced- the knowledge that they have- are all expressed in their oratures. In the article "The Undefined of Oral Tradition" David William Cohen says about such knowledge:

This knowledge includes matters of immediate concern to the past. This knowledge includes matters of immediate concern to the individual: knowledge of self, of belief, of ritual, of sacred objects and sacred places, of household, of burials of kin, of lands and lineages estates, of the lives and works of antecedent kin, of affines, of neighbours and neighbourhood. (12)

Academic attention to tribal oratures can help to redefine the concept of literature in a country like India where oral literature is widespread. The oratures of Muduvan community is the testimony for individual and collective knowledge and it is high time that such oratures have to be included in the literary canon-initially in regional languages and later in English via translation. Such attempts also help to shed the popular notion of their subordinate identity or sub-altern rank.

Works Cited

- Bascom, William R. "Verbal Art." *The Journal of American Folklore*. 68.269 (1955): 245-252. www.jstor.org
- Cohen, David William. "The Undefining of Oral Tradition." *Ethnohistory*. 36.1 (1989): 9-18. www.jstor.org
- Finnegan, Ruth. "How Oral Is Oral Literature." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*. 37.1(1974): 52-64. www.jstor.org
- Kellogg, Robert. "Oral Literature." *New Literary History*. 5.1(1973): 55-66. www.jstor.org
- Pasayat, Chitrasen. *Tribal and Folk Culture*. New Delhi: Anmol Publications Pvt. Ltd, 2003.
- Patnaik, Nityanand. *Folklore of Tribal Communities*. New Delhi: Gyan Publishing House, 2002.

List of Contributors

Dasappan V.Y., Associate Professor and Principal, St. Xavier's College, Thumba, Thiruvananthapuram.

Claramma Jose, Associate Professor, Post Graduate and Research Department of English, Loyola College, Chennai.

Sreedevi K Menon, Asst. Professor, Dept. of English, Mercy College, Palakkad.

Neena Kishor, Kerala University, Thiruvananthapuram.

Kavitha N, Assistant Professor in English, All Saints' College Thiruvananthapuram.

Deepthi V G., Research Scholar, Department of English, SSUS, Kalady.

Lekshmi R Nair, Assistant Professor of English, T. M. Jacob Memorial Government College, Ernakulam.

Joice Sebastian, Singhaniya University, Rajasthan.

Suma Alexander, Asst Professor, Bishop Moore College, Mavelikara.

Preethy Eapen, Guest Lecturer, St Joseph's College for Women, Alappuzha.

Neena V S, Guest Lecturer in English, St. Xavier's College, Thumba, Thiruvananthapuram.

Susan Alexander, Asst. Prof. Dept. of English, St. Cyril's College, Adoor.

Meera Prasannan, Dept. of English, NSS Hindu College, Changanacherry.

Dawn Mariat Mathew, Guest Lecturer, Dept. of English, Alphonsa College, Pala

N.H. Kallur, Associate Professor, P.G. Department of Studies in English, Karnatak University, Karnataka State.

J.S. Jahangir, Assistant Professor of English, Iqbal College, Peringammala, Thiruvananthapuram.

Anusha Das, Asst: Professor, Dept: of English, Bishop Moore College, Mavelikara

Jerome K Jose, Asst. Prof. Department of English, Nirmala College, Muvattupuzha.