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The Post Colonial Predicament of Africa in Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*

Ousephachan K.V.

Postcoloniality is a remarkably heterogeneous intellectual reality marked by a disorderly scramble. It also refers to the historical, material and actual living conditions of newly independent countries in the world. Post colonial writers in the erstwhile European colonies realized that their chief responsibility lay in nation building. They had to do it by erasing the past. Europeans had constructed their nations as primitive, savage and ancient. This was especially true of Africa. They found Africa both fascinating and repellent. Africa was a fabulous land with unspeakable rites of the cannibals. For the European “going up a river in Africa was like travelling back to the earliest beginnings of the world when vegetation rioted on the earth and big trees were kings”(Conrad 61). Africa depicted in the European novels was a land with ‘impenetrable forest’(61), throbbing drums, primitive customs, sudden sunsets and black water fever – an Africa which has no meaning, shape and coherence. It was indeed the “heart of darkness”. Leo Africanus in the 16th century announced with confidence; “The Negros likewise leade a beastly kind of life, being utterly destitute of the use of reason, of dexteritie, of wit and of arts. Yea they so behave themselves as if they had continually lived in a forest among wild beasts” (12).

Chinua Achebe and other post colonial writers of Africa wrote against this background. They resisted and rejected the western constructions of their nations and sought “to retrieve a pre-colonial past that would help them define the nation”(Nayar 68). They also tried to destroy the stereotype that western imagination had created. They were also attempting to demolish the falsified

myths created by the European. They had the double function of destroying the unreal and preserving the real. They knew that they were to free Africa from the forces of literacy colonialism as well and that they were to criticize and expose injustice wherever they found it. Achebe as well as other African writers was conscious of their stupendous responsibility as African writers. Achebe himself observed:

Here then is an adequate revolution for me to espouse – to help my society to regain belief in itself and put away the complexes of the years of denigration and self abasement. And it is essentially a question of education in the best sense of the word. Here I think my aims and the deepest aspiration of my society meet. For no thinking African can escape the pain of the wound in our soul. You have heard of the African personality, of African democracy, of the African way to socialism, of negritude and so on. They are all props we have fashioned at different times to help us get on our feet again. Once we are up we shan't need any of them anymore.(42)

Achebe who was well aware of the dehumanizing effects of colonialism spoke about the devastating effects of the interaction of Africa with the west. He said: “In terms of human dignity and human relations the encounter was almost a complete disaster for the black races. It has warped the mental attitudes of both black and white”(135). Even after the departure of foreign rulers the condition has not changed much. The position of the colonial masters has been taken over by indigenous leaders who resorted to systemic violence to protect and retain power. Bill Ashcroft, who comprehended the postcolonial condition well, identified issues and factors that indicated the impossibility of dealing with any part of the colonial process without considering its antecedents and consequences. The factors included “the development of new elites within independent societies, often buttressed by neo-colonial institutions, the development of internal divisions based on racial, linguistic or religious

discrimination, the continuing unequal treatment of indigenous people in settler/invader societies” (2).

This complex situation is rightly perceived and delineated by Achebe in the novel *Anthills of the Savannah*. For a better and clearer understanding of the novel we should have a bird’s eye view of African history in general and Nigerian history in particular, for history provides the subtext for the plot of the novel. Kangan is no other country other than modern Nigeria. We have seen that European imagination had already created an African stereotype which was far removed from reality. It is to be acknowledged that Europe’s contact with Africa was slight and short lived. The coastline had been known and controlled by the Europeans for many centuries but the interior of Africa remained virtually unexplored until the end of the nineteenth century. It was in this context that ambiguities and contradictions regarding the African continent flourished.

The human status of Africans had also been debated. Although a papal bull had stated in 1537 that non-Europeans were also human beings with full spiritual rights, many European countries had not taken a stable stand on the human state of Africans until recently. Even when exploration of the interior had begun the myths of inferiority were so deeply rooted as to be almost unshakable. If any trace of the past was found, it was argued that they could not be African. Failure to respond to European values was also thought of as an evidence of inferiority.

The end of the 19th century witnessed the imposition of the foreign rule. Africa had been carved up between European powers for political advancement. The division of the continent in the interest of Europe cut across tribal and economic affiliations. Nigeria was formed in that manner. Nigeria got independence in 1960. It was a loose federation of three strong regional governments. Each of the regions – Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo – was the centre of one of the major tribal groups. The Igbo are a single people speaking a number of related dialects with many social features in common.

The social consciousness of the Igbo people was vastly different from that of the other African tribes. For instance, there was no concentration of power in an individual or a specific group but was distributed among several groups. The unifying elements in this flexible and non-authoritarian system were marriages, titles, oracles and shrines and the related values.

Tens of thousands of Igbo slaves were collected by the Portuguese in the 16th and 18th Century. But the Europeans made sustained contact with this society only in the 19th Century. The British had never intervened politically until the end of the 19th Century. The Oil River Protectorate was established in 1885 and its sphere of influence was extended in 1900. It was only in the year 1914 that the whole country was brought under British administration. The British who wanted only a general control of the state were baffled by the fragmented decentralized Igbo society, for they could not find the powerful chiefs through whom they could execute their will. In 1900 they imposed a system of direct rule which was resented by the Igbo's for many reasons. So in 1918 indirect rule was established. This system also was not without faults. The system of government was recognized in 1930 which continued up to independence in 1960 with minor changes now and then.

There is a final and shattering episode in the history of the Igbo people. The Civil war fought in Igbo territory for over two and half years profoundly affected the lives of the people. In 1965 an Igbo dominated group of officers, seeking to stamp out political corruption staged a successful coup and handed the control of the country to General Ironsi. He abrogated the federal constitution and established a military government. He committed a blunder of abolishing the former Regions and replacing them by four provinces. There was immediate reaction. There had been demands for succession which turned into bloody clashes between the Northerners and the Igbo. In July 1966 mutinous units of the Nigerian army captured Ironsi and replaced him with Lt. Col. Gowon who restored federal system of government. This was followed by a number of coups, some of which had been successful while some others failed.

Achebe's works respond to a series of critical periods in Nigerian history since 1890- the introduction and imposition of European culture and Law in Eastern Negeria; the unforeseen consequences of the attempt by Igbo's to adapt that culture and its technology to their own needs and to keep the best of both the worlds; first republic; the civil war; the series of military coups and the struggle to understand the resist dictatorship. Through all these works his concern has been "the trouble with Nigeria"(1983:1). Achebe was aware that he was confronting a culture, a system of values, a complex power relations which produced and was produced by colonialism. In his work he does focus his attention on the interaction between the Europeans and the Africans.

Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* is a political novel, an explicit comment on the social predicament of the people in Kangan, the fictional name for Nigeria. They are caught between two cultures namely the traditional African culture and the modern culture, which is the product of colonialism. They are also caught in a web of complex power relationships. The western colonial masters have left. But black masters are now standing in their stead. Leaders who were champions of freedom and fraternity have turned out to be cruel oppressors.

As in his earlier novels – *Things Fall Apart*, *Arrow of God* and *A Man of the People* – in *Anthills of the of the Savannah* too Achebe reveals his continued and horrified fascination with the exercise of power. The novel opens with Sam, the military ruler of the African state of Kangan disdainfully treating his civilian cabinet like children. The subject matter reflects the political realities of Africa, especially Nigeria during the last two decades – civil war, the corruption of power and the rapid alterations of civilian and military rule. The episodes also document the harsh realities of military rule, the public execution, the police searches, the sycophantic cabinet meetings, the road blocks, the inevitable counter coup etc.

The plot of the novel hinges on the willingness of His Excellency, the President of the country to visit Abazon, the distant North Western region

which has been in the grip of a severe drought for the previous two years and where the people have been going through great suffering. This willingness is the test of the sensitivity of the elite to the problems of the people of whether the rulers are willing to identify themselves with the people, like their former colonial masters they are more obsessed with the questions of their own dignity and status as shown in their distance from the rabble. They choose the latter course because in their view it is only distance which can protect the mystique of power, something absolutely vital for maintaining law and order in the country.

The story of the novel develops corresponding to the development of the three major male characters in the novel. They are all intelligent and successful. The three men have known each other for the last twenty five years. It is to be noted that their connectedness is asserted not through solidarity but through competition and resentment.

Sam, the young army commander was invited to become the head of the state after the recent coup. He was the most successful of the three. He assimilated himself into the existing power structure. The young Sam, according to Chris, undergoes a metamorphosis. Sam gets transformed from the deluded actor to the rough beast. His friends now become convinced that he is very dangerous. He now wants to be president for life. Sam goes over the edge into a dream of power. He believes in the role he is acting – which is a form of madness for Achebe.

The next important character is Chris Oriko, the commissioner for information and it is through his eyes that we see the President in his cabinet. He is in the World of Power Politics but not of it. In the first half of the novel he rationalizes the projects of the President and tells – “The Cathedrals of Europe, the Taj Mahal of India, the Pyramids of Egypt and the stone towers of Zimbabwe were all raised on the backs of the serfs, starving peasants and slaves”(69). He also tries to moderate the rash criticism of Ikem. But he becomes increasingly disillusioned with the corridors of power. He mediates between

the extreme demands of his two friends and runs out of luck when he has finally to make a choice which leads to their joint destruction.

The third important figure is Ikem Osodi, who is the editor of the *National Gazette*, poet, novelist and playwright. He severely criticises the abuses of the government through the editorials which Chris is trying to moderate. It is he who articulates an alternative political creed in defiance of the President and a mythic account of what is happening in Kangan.

Beatrice Okoh is the only prominent female character in the novel. She is the Senior Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of finance. She is friendly with the President, has a sisterly relationship with Ikem and is the girl friend of Chris. She challenges Ikem, the champion of the oppressed for his inadequacy of political thinking. She herself is the champion of the weak and the oppressed, namely, women. She is also a prophetess and foretells their future halfway through the novel – “And I see trouble building up for us. It will get to Ikem first. No joking, Chris; He will be the precursor to make straight the way. But after him it will be you. We are in it, Ikem, you, me and even Him”(109).

Her prophecy comes true. In the second half Ikem puts his credo into action. Chris resigns in sympathy and the political crisis deepens. Away from the centers of power they each find a previously undetected solidarity in people. Ikem’s disillusionment is complete. He now has the desire to connect his essence with the earth and earth’s people. He understands that government’s failure is not primarily its massive corruption, its foreign control its second class capitalism, nor its violent oppression. “It is the failure of our rulers to reestablish vital inner links with the poor and dispossessed of this country with the bruised heart that throbs painfully at the core of nation’s being”(135). He abandons his editor Oship, speaks out against all forms of oppression, is accused of inviting students, taken into custody and fatally wounded. Thus, he has fulfilled his role as a precursor.

Chris too begins to recognize the value of the poor and oppressed. But he realizes that his end is near. There is the news of another coup. The President is overthrown by his chief of staff. In the drunken celebrations that follow, Chris is shot by a policeman whom he tries to prevent from raping a girl.

Beatrice is left. She remains in Bassa, the capital city, helping the fugitives and forming a new sisterhood. With her are Elewa, the half literate sales girl and Agatha her housemaid. The novel comes to a close on notes of optimism and harmony. The union of the elite and the people – Ikem and Elewa – brings about a new birth, the baby girl and Amaechina, symbolizing the new Nigeria, free from social cleavage and bound by the ties of brotherhood and friendship. This is how the primitive integrity of the earth which was violated when her favorite children- the famine stricken peasantry of Abazon – had been insulted and humiliated, is now restored. Religious cleavage is overcome in the ecumenical fraternization of the ritual dance, celebrating the birth of a new nation.

Even then it is to be noted that in *Anthills of the Savannah* Achebe makes past speak for the present, since the legacy of slavery, forced labour and colonial rule cannot be easily erased from the contemporary political scheme in Nigeria. The rash of one party leadership and military regimes displays the continued concentration of power in the hands of a privileged few. Charismatic figures who argued for mass struggle against colonialism introduced repressive measures against their critics and reproduced the humanitarian rhetoric of the colonizers to justify their authority. They claimed that they knew what was good for the people who were to be disciplined in the interest of the national solidarity and economic progress. The neo colonial predicament of the Africans depicted in the novel by Achebe may be summed up with his own words:

There will always be some people whose personal, selfish interests are, in the short term at least, well served by the mismanagement and social iniquities. Naturally they will be extremely loud in their adulation of the country and its system

and will be anxious to pass themselves off as patriots and to vilify those who disagree with them as trouble-makers or even traitors. But doomed is the nation which permits such people to define patriotism for it. (212)

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Dalits' Marginal Existence and their Struggle for Identity in Sharan Kumar Limbale's *The Outcaste*

Lynda Stanley

Dalit Literature is the forum and the medium of expression of the experience of the communities that have been excommunicated, marginalized, exploited and humiliated for ages in the Indian caste ridden Hindu Society. The term Dalit literally means the downtrodden, socially and economically depressed and underprivileged in gaining secure reimbursement in the society. Gandhi called them Harijans, the children of God, the high caste Hindu called them Untouchables. Dalit literature reflects Dalit experience and sensibility, attempting to define and assert Dalit identity from a primarily Dalit point of view. In many ways, it is a protest literature which faithfully mirrors the stark realities of the Dalit situation. The Dalit author Sharan Kumar Limbale calls it "the burning cry of untouchables against the injustices of thousands of years".

The new category of writing 'Dalit literature' has established itself as a new literary movement in several regions in India in the last four decades. Dalit literature is one which acquaints people with the caste system and untouchability in India, its appalling nature and its system of exploitation. In other words, Dalit is not a caste but a realization and is related to the experiences, joys and sorrows, and struggles of those in the lowest stratum of society. It matures with a sociological point of view and is related to the principles of negativity, rebellion and loyalty to science, thus finally ending as revolutionary.

The literal meaning of the word *Dalit* - is one who has been trampled under feet or who has been oppressed, exploited, insulted, humiliated and thrown outside the pale of civic society, i.e., turned into an untouchable, riff-raff of the society. All those who are born in the Dalit community will not be

considered Dalits; we have to stress the category of 'Dalit' as a historical construction. Dalit writing is revolutionary in its aims; the destruction of the caste system and the establishment of equality in the social and political spheres. Dalit critics and writers have raised a number of critical questions about Indian literature and Indian literary history. They identified two of the important functions of Dalit writing. Firstly, Dalit writing attempts to deconstruct 'the dominant, castiest constructions of India identity' and secondly, it constructs a distinct Dalit identity. Dalit writing presents a Dalit centric view of life and constructs Dalit identity in relation to Colonial identity and Indian identity. Often a question is raised whether the marginalized can speak. It is a fact that the marginalized cannot remain mute for long time. They have to speak and find an outlet for their tears and fears, anguish and anger and thus, register their existence. The question of their identity has assumed different dimensions amongst the creative writers.

According to Dennis Wrong the term 'identity crises' have become the 'semantic beacons of our time' for they communicate verbally the discontent prevalent in our modern life and society. The question of identity and identity crisis plagues modern man in his quest to carve out niche for himself in this world. But the same question assumes a much crucial and gigantic proportion for an individual for whom identity becomes a struggle to survive with dignity and equality. The marginalized, the subaltern, the Dalit, call him whatever you may, one thing remains constant and that is his daily struggle for existence as the repressed, downtrodden and exploited section of society.

Discriminated on account of various factors, the Dalits are the victims of various structures that construct society like economic, social, gender based, cultural, etc. Long suppressed into submission and silence the marginalized or Dalits have emerged out of the shadows of centuries of subjugation. Inspired by revolutionary social activists they have now given a voice to their identity through a literature of their own. In other words: "Dalit" implies those who have been broken and ground down by those above them in the social hierarchy

in a deliberate and active way. A Dalit has no personal life of his own but is dissolved in the engulfing whirlpool of his community.

Some of the widely read writers of Dalit literature available in English translation include Laxman Gaekwad's *The Branded*, Bama's *Karukku* and *Sangati*, Narendra Jhadav's *Untouchables: My family's Triumphant Journey Out of the Caste System in Modern India*, Joseph Macwan's *The Stepchild* and so on. The identity of a Dalit writer is a highly debated one. Some Dalit critics like Limbale argue that Dalit literature is the exclusive forte of writers who are by birth Dalits and that upper caste writers like Mahashwetha Devi (*Breast Stories*), Sara Joseph (*Thaikulam*), Kumaran Asan (*Chandalabhikshuki*), Mulkraj Anand (*Untouchable*) and Premchand (*Kafan*), though chronicles of the dalit experience, cannot be categorized as dalit writers as they never underwent the trials and tribulations of dalit existence.

Sharan Kumar Limbale is a rebel who exposes the hypocrisies of Indian caste society through the narrative of his life. This paper centres on the depictions of the "self"; the split identification; untouchability; poverty; education and language as evidenced in *Akkarmashi* and would argue that Limbale's suffering is intensified on the account of he being an akkarmashi or illegitimate. To be a Dalit in a caste-ridden society is a curse and to be an illegitimate within the Dalit community is to be doubly cursed. Dalits are "outcasts" to the society but a "half-cast" of an "outcast" is much less than being a human. It is the record of "the woes of the son of a whore".

This Article also makes an attempt to understand the vision and voice of the Dalits as the texts speak for the "outcasts" and are therefore rendered from voiceless and passive objects of history to self-conscious subjects who procreate alternative modes of knowledge and knowing. Limbale projects before the readers an objective and disinterested account of his life from birth to adulthood, carefully creating the image of his community in conflict with the contemporary social and cultural conditions. The narrator's self reflects his life in particular and the life of the community in general.

The Outcaste mirrors his birth and life. In it, he talks about how Mahar women were sexually exploited by the upper caste Marathas. It was rather a strange social practise in North India that Dalit girls, just after attaining puberty, were kept by the upper caste land lords to satisfy their lust. It was almost a customary service for all Dalit families throughout Maharashtra to give their daughters to the upper caste Patils for their sexual needs. In return, these young women were given shelter with few provisions to live on. Dalit girls were kept as their concubines. Dalit women are seen as thrice-subjugated as women at the bottom of social pyramids.

Though the auto-biography of Limbale has a plethora of female characters, the most important woman character in it is Shantamai, the grandmother of the narrator. Limbale's history is his mother's life, at the most his grandmother's. His mother is an untouchable where as his father is a high caste from one of the privileged classes of India. His mother went through a state of extreme poverty, whereas his father was an affluent one. Limbale is an Akkarmashi (halfcaste). He is condemned and branded as an illegitimate one. *The Outcaste*, when published, raised a storm of criticism and led to a stormy debate. The book is a land mark in Marathi Dalit literature. *Akkarmashi* came to be recognised as a contemporary classic immediately after its publication. Limbale's book is a frighteningly candid story of his childhood and growth as an undesirable person.

A Dalit has no personal life of his own but is dissolved in the engulfing whirlpool of his community. *Akkarmashi* works as the mouthpiece of the community, it depicts their togetherness in triumphs and tribulations as "the self belongs to the people and people find a voice in the self" (Butterfield 3).

Limbale is so much attached to his grandmother. He prefers to live with her. She treated her grandson as if he were her step-son. She undergoes many hardships to bring him up and educate him. She feels proud of him. Limbale portrays his grandmother in a realistic way Shantama, and his mother, Maramai, ordinary Dalit women. Limbale says about Shantamai: "Her mouth smelt foul and her teeth had turned quite black from the herbal powder she used to clean them with."

She gathers dung for making cakes of dung to sell them due to her hard work and constant starvation Her skin has dried up and shrivelled. She herself eats *bhakaris* made out of the *jowar* grains washed out of the dung of animals and gives Sharan *bhakaris* out of the flour collected as alms. The hunger in the autobiography is depicted in such a way that it implies constantly the way it has been treated by two different perspectives. One is of lust and The another is of hunger for food. The vast life beyond these two hungers doesn't exist and no wonder the author of this autobiography has well captured the future of these hungers which will swallow up the entire family just as a huge serpent eats its prey. Whenever there is wedding in the prestigious village families, the dalits grow as excited as wolves. Those upper caste families in his village invite the entire village to the feast. In the end even the Dalits are also invited. Limbale narrates one of his bitter experiences at the wedding feast:

They served kheer in our plates very young children were given only a small portion. I ate greedily as soon as I was served and emptied my plate. I asked for more helpings. As Masamai was alone at home and hungry, I thought of sneaking this delicacy to her. I asked for more and more kheer though my stomach was full and walked back home with it. I was very happy at what I was doing. But Girmallya happened to notice me, he snatched my bowl of kheer, threw it on the ground and slapped me in the face. "Son of a bitch" he shouted, "if you didn't want it why did you take it? Don't let me see you more than once at any feast after this. The scum! They eat as much as they want and still crave for more to take home". I returned home crying. Girmallya didn't allow anyone to sneak the kheer away. That included my sister too. I returned home with my empty plate but Shantamai had managed to sneak some kheer away. (8-9)

Limbale's grandmother Shantamai shares a very thorny existence with dada, her Muslim partner. It is she who has to bear the burden of begging, sweeping and arranging for the survival of her family. Whenever a quarrel

arises with Masamai his mother on account of the narrator, she leaves the house and starts living at the bus stand with the narrator and dada. Whenever Limbale felt hungry, Shantamai begged 'bhakari' for him. Sharan's mother was not an adulterous but a victim of a social system. She is the only daughter of Shantamai. She was married to a man called Vithal Kamble. Vithal was a labourer with a farmer. Poverty, misery and hunger sat like a hump on his shoulders. Vithal Kamble worked for Hanumantha Limbale. He was a Patil who helped Vithal in times of need. It was he who ruined the domestic happiness of Vithal and Masamai. She became estranged from her husband Vithal Kamble. In the course of time Kamble remarried but now Masamai was like a spoilt fruit. She was kept like a pet pigeon in the nest of Hanumantha Limbale. Soon Masamai gave birth to a son. The baby's birth must have shaken the foundations of the institution of caste. The beauty of a woman becomes a curse for her if she is born in a low caste as she has to constantly bear the assaults of lustful people. Caste oppression seems to be a never ending process. He is really sympathetic towards the victims who hardly have any choice. Yet, here were quarrels everyday between Hanumantha and Masamai. The new born baby was disowned by his father, Hanumantha. Later Masamai became a concubine of another Patil, Yaswantharao Sidramappa Patil who was called 'kaka' and gave birth to eight children. Despite her liberality in sexual matter, she is portrayed as a victim of the social order which makes the Dalit women at easy prey to the licentious upper caste land lords. Sharan is treated as 'Akkarmashi' which literally means 'bastard', a child born out of illicit sexual relationship. His father and the society denied him the status of a son and rightful share in property. Orphaned Sharan Kumar Limbale wandered from pole to post in search of an anchor. He was ill treated and hooted out from most places because he was born of a concubine.

This autobiography is an account of his birth from extramarital association between his helpless mother and a high caste Patil. Sharan did not attack any particular person. But his prime concern is to prove his mother's innocence and to narrate the story of his successful struggle against unjust

society. In his sight, his mother is not a commercial fruit but an unfortunate prey to the caste system. He wrote this autobiography as an outlet to his pent-up feelings creating equilibrium. It is true that one's caste continues fragment of a larger caste group into numerous sub-caste groups, creating in the process a hierarchic stratification within what has been a single cast. All in all, caste is alived social experience in India more than a prescribed mode of social classification. In this society, a child is identified by the name of his father but not by that of his mother.

Limbale's attitude to women is a noticeable thing. In his works there are many women characters and not one of them without a serious complication in her life. There are widows, childless women, deserted-women. He presents his own mother who has been cheated again and again, exploited most blatantly in every relationship. The author, however, neither curses nor blames her in his narrative. The boys of Mahar community are not allowed to play with the *Wani* and the Brahmin boys playing Kabbadi. Limbale expresses his view on the attitude of the so called upper castes:

Being marked as Mahar we couldn't join them. So, Mallya, Umbrya, Parshya, all from my caste, began to play touch-and-go. We played one kind of game while the high caste village boys played another. The two games were played separately, like two separate whirlwinds (2)

The Dalit women are not only victims of upper caste male lust but the males of their own caste too take part in their degradation. It is the skill of the writer that he doesn't seem to glorify the Dalit males. They are rather blamed for their neglect of their wives and mothers, the drunkenness, the apathy and lack of affection on their part. Dhanavva, a woman of Limbale's village, became a victim of the lust of her own father and became pregnant. After the death of her husband who had been struck dead by lightning, she came to her parents house to live with them. Shankar, Dhanavva's father made her pregnant. He was an immoral rascal. In order to come out of this situation Dhanavva used to visit Devki, a spinster, a midwife whose occupation was performing abortions.

An incestuous relationship was established between Dhanavva and Shankar. Dhanavva visited the narrator's mother many a time for consolation. The immoral Shankar says: "I have sown the seed from which she has grown as a plant, now why shouldn't I eat the fruits of this plant? Father and daughter, plant and fruit and conception." (67)

The narrator-protagonist is someone more inferior to a Dalit. It is surprising to note that he is an untouchable among the untouchables. His identity is that of an "Akkarmashi" and this is what the narrator tries to present through the many episodes of his life. With a government job and education to cushion him, Limbale still finds it difficult to get a wife. Limbale never enjoyed the prospect of selecting a wife of his choice. A single attempt at bride-viewing ends in disaster. At one point the reader suspects Limbale to be satisfied with any woman for a wife. He does not make a choice. He notes, "The girl I married needed to be a hybrid like me to ensure a proper match. A bastard must always be matched with another bastard. No one else will marry their daughters to a bastard like me" (98). The text becomes the eye witness account of the horrors of the lives of a particular subaltern community.

However, Limbale does not succumb to the pitiable existence but acquires liberation and freedom from his purgatory of caste through education. The knowledge he had acquired from books, had taught him to think differently. He understood that the sufferings of their lives were based on the false concept of superiority. He has imbibed a "Dalit Consciousness", a consciousness of their own slavery, an understanding of their experiences of exclusion, subjugation, dispossession and oppression, down the ages. It is this knowledge that liberates him. Limbale notes in his critical work, *Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature*, "The conditions that I have written about, the environment that I have written about, no longer exist in my house, because of the position that I happened to hold today" (156). He further explains:

Now, after twenty-five years, my past has been so destroyed that I have been cut off from it, I've been completely separated from it. Neither have I gone home, nor does my mother see me as I

was before. ‘Some big officer has come, some VIP guest has come’: thus will she offer me water. I no longer have the same attachment to my colony, my relatives, my language. Everything has changed. And because of that change, I am done writing about the history that I had to write about. (155)

The past does not lure him with its wonders of nostalgia as there is nothing to be nostalgic about. Limbale’s social protests and the subsequent redemption serve as inspiration for other members in the community to use education to overcome their economic and social conditions.

The upper caste Hindus in Indian society used to exploit the Dalits by making them do the most menial jobs the whole day just for a piece of bread. The text is replete with incidents of hunger which is projected before a class of readers who are blissfully unaware of such undercurrents. The Dalits are treated worse than animals. Their presence is usually banned from upper-class localities. They were made to hang pots from their necks to avoid polluting the streets by their spittle and had to carry brooms tied to themselves to wipe away their footprints from the “upper caste” streets.

The Outcaste deals with the question of identity of Dalits and their humiliation, feelings of anger, forbearance and compassion— the intertwining of all these elements gives Limbale’s autobiography an immense vitality. It is a moving, pathetic, social document on caste oppression. Autobiography and poetry writing are amply found in Dalit literature, and have been tackled efficiently. Dalit literature is not simply literature. It is associated with a movement to bring about change. Dalits are masses exploited and oppressed economically, socially, culturally, in the name of religion and other factors. Dalit Literature is an arduous endeavour from the canonical to the marginal, from mega-narratives to micro-narratives, from the virtual to the real, and from self- emulation to self-affirmation. Dalit writers like Limbale hopes that this exploited group of people will bring about a socio-cultural revolution in India.

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Roland Emmerich's *2012*: A Neocolonial Reading

Anupama S Varma

Post colonialism is, perhaps, one of the most widely used tools of deconstructive literary analysis. The evolution and rising popularity of non-western literature has provided a fertile field for the spread of postcolonial critical thoughts and theories. However, contemporary history has recorded a great many changes that compel literary analysts to cast postcolonialism to the past and embark on newer ideologies that give a better comprehension of the present world. The rise and spread of globalization has had deep cultural and political ramifications. Vast changes in communication technology have only boosted the spread of globalization, and today cultural exchange between people, between nations, take place almost on a daily basis. Globalization has also been seen as a neocolonial agenda through which the West or the First World maintains its sway, largely through the medium of culture. It has also led to the redefinition, revival and forging of new ties between nations of the world. This particular aspect is clarified by geopolitical studies, which is fast becoming an integral part of cultural and literary analysis.

Geopolitics and its impact on culture have been a fervent area of study in recent times especially since the equations between the nations of the world have taken on newer and more significant dimensions. Geopolitics primarily refers to “. . . geographic influences on power relationships in international relations.” The term was coined by Rudolph Kjellen, a Swedish political scientist. Of late, the term has been used more often and is applied to international politics in general. Contemporary geopolitics helps in not only monitoring international relations but also enables one to identify different

power structures and their manipulation and configuration by nations and leaders.

That literature reflects society is an idea which has been much touted about into a cliché. However, the same function has been increasingly been taken up by cinema as well. The development of Film Studies has indeed contributed to wider and deeper study of the medium with the result that cinema is now a veritable platform to express and debate social, political, economic and cultural issues. In this respect, cinema is accorded equal status as that of literature. While literature now seems embroiled in stiff competition in the wake of innovations with regard to modes and manners of publication, readership, and whole lot of associated issues, cinema, in the mean time, has taken vast strides and seems to revel wholeheartedly in the novelties offered by technology. Even while the audience is awed by technological and even sensory gimmicks, the thematic relevance of cinema retains its importance and generates interpretations and attitudes. More importantly, cinema, be it regional, national or international, also functions as a medium of propaganda wherein international cultural and power equations are rewritten and clarified.

International politics is a recurrent motif in Hollywood, especially in movies depicting the apocalypse. The American obsession with being the regular victim of alien attacks, conspiracies and natural disasters is a much discussed topic. In all the movies that deal with a similar theme, the attempt has been to reinforce the image of America as the *uber* power, who is frequently under attack, but who puts up a brave front, survives and recuperates in no time, thanks to its capable rulers, most efficient defence system and a number of super heroes. At the same time, another line of thought that recurs is the constant trials they make to ward off disasters, and plan out strategies for counterattack, showing them to be well aware of the imminent danger and highlighting their resourcefulness and preparedness.

The stock theme of American invincibility and the attempt to be the saviour of this world is reinforced in Roland Emmerich's *2012* (Columbia Pictures 2009). Founded on the hype generated by the Mayan myth of the end

of the world on December 21, 2012, Emmerich's movie gives a stunning picture of the apocalypse, underneath which can be found a subtext that subtly indicates contemporary international relations, further highlighting a neocolonial edge to international relations.

The film begins in 2009, when Indian astrophysicist Satnam Tsurutani reveals his findings about the scalding core of the earth, to his American geologist friend Adrian Helmsley. These findings predict a gruesome end of the world, triggered by the displacement of earth's crust – an event that is uncomfortably close at hand. The information is duly conveyed to the highest authorities in America. What follows is a high-level meeting of the G-8 nations who rope in China to build huge arks for transportation in the wake of disaster. Along with this there takes place deliberate attempts to suppress the spread of facts about this impending doom, and those who dare to reveal information meet with brutal murder. In a sub-plot, science fiction writer, Jackson Curtis tries to overcome the separation from his family and works for the Russian business tycoon Yuri Karpov. In the meantime, rumours are rife regarding the end of the world while the powerful and the rich secretly book their way to the life-saving arks that are being made in China.

Jackson Curtis makes a trip to Yellowstone National Park with his children Noah and Lily. The hushed activity and danger signs spread around the area make the author curious and soon he is informed of the imminent tragedy. He also meets Charlie Frost, a loner and prophetic radio jockey who broadcasts his countdown to the doom. He also tells Charlie about a map purported to reveal details about the location of the ark. From here on, the narrative picks up speed and a series of natural disasters – volcanic eruptions, earth quakes, floods – gobble up the American cities and gradually different places across the world. Curtis manages to gather his wife, her boyfriend and children on board an aircraft. He eventually meets his boss and joins his flight which dramatically leaves for China, while the world around rapidly crumbles down.

The location of the arks in China proves to be a veritable convergence of global cultures. At the same time, it is here that the neocolonial agenda is subtly played out. A perceptive viewer can easily understand the calculated equations between the major world powers. Typically, it is America who takes the initiative to construct the arks, with help and support from equally strong G-8 nations. China is chosen for its provision of cheap labour, yet another stereotypical idea. The lucky few who manage to buy their ways into the ark, and from thereon to the new world post-apocalypse, are the rich and the mighty from the American, The European and Arab nations. A cleverly hidden racist agenda too can be identified here since representatives from the Third World are next to nil. Also found absent is the common man with no billions to buy his space in the new world. The very fact that the Buddhist monks, the ark labourer Tenzin, and the Indian astrophysicist Satnam are left out of the new world speaks a lot about the global attitude towards the emerging economies of the Third World. Both China and India are often touted as ‘fast’ developing nations. Their contemporary status as emerging economies has been viewed by many observers as a possible competition or even a threat to western domination.

Neocolonialism is sometimes used as a synonym for globalization, a phenomenon fueled by capitalism and consumerism. Globalization as a neocolonial trend has a cultural edge to it. While postcolonialism was a political domination of the colonies, often by force, neocolonialism works imperceptibly through culture. If Britain and Europe were at vanguard of colonialism, neocolonialism or globalization finds America at the helm, interpellating habits and attitudes.

It is also interesting and important to look at the depiction of characters of different nationalities. The American President in the movie, Thomas Wilson is a Black American with a prominently unassuming name. He is concerned about the turn of events and finds it difficult to betray his citizens. When disaster strikes, he chooses to go down with his people, leaving his daughter distraught. Jackson Curtis, the author, successfully manoeuvres his way into the arks, thereby confirming to the idea of the enterprising, never-give up American

attitude. On the other hand, the Third World characters do not get a just representation. The ark labourer Tenzin comes across as disgruntled and longsuffering and he is conveniently eliminated in the end when he meets with a very painful death. The Indian astrophysicist Satnam makes just three appearances on screen and on all occasions, he is shown in shabby kurta-salwar, his wife in traditional sari and a very unpretentious, small house. The most striking and perhaps a bit absurd depiction is his last scene, when he informs Adrian Helmsley that he was not picked up for the ark. The scene hails the heights of technology since the scientists communicate over a phone; it is indeed surprising that technology survives even when the whole world has supposedly collapsed and a tsunami rises in the background. It also reinforces the stereotypical image of poverty-stricken India. Satnam has in his background, a whole lot of Indians wearing garbs clearly reminiscent of the 1960s and 1970s, without a modicum of modernity in the year 2012. An Indian viewer will be forced to wonder where his crowded cities, towering skyscrapers, suit-wearing corporates and multimillionaires disappeared, while for the western viewers the idea of India as a poverty-stricken country would be reinforced. Even a prominent scientist like Satnam comes across as a poverty-stricken hapless person. This is ironical since he was one of the first to alert Helmsley about the doom, and is an active researcher.

In a broader perspective, it can be said that neocolonialism, as depicted in the movie, has ways and means to get rid off elements and entities that do not conform to its agenda. It also reveals that all the paeans on the world becoming smaller and boundaries getting erased are just superficial claims. The First World still retains a condescending attitude towards the Third World and the attitude of Western supremacy is anything but diminished. The choice of passengers to the new world also shows principles of eugenics, as only the best of all species are chosen to be makers of the new world. The depiction of the ark labourer Tenzin and the Indian scientist Satnam belie the image of their respective countries as potential superpowers. At the same time, the film reiterates the idea of America as the best and foremost, as the only reliable entity who can solve any crisis.

Representation is an important aspect in both literature and cinema, and the ways in which people, places and events are represented are keys to the subtexts which often reveal significant meanings and interpretations. *2012* was probably produced in tune with the popular interest in the Mayan prediction and the frenzy it generated as the date approached. However, what is more striking than the apocalypse is how the movie represents contemporary geopolitics. *2012*, like most other Hollywood apocalyptic movies, thus emphasizes American hegemony and in the process exposes the latent neocolonialism in contemporary international relations.

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Game of Thrones: A Neo-Colonial Catalyst to Induce Cultural Perversion in the Select third World

Jobin Thomas

Game of Thrones has become the most popular TV serial of our time outnumbering the fan base of *Harry Potter* series and *The Lord of the Rings* series. The HBO aired and always available for download *Game of Thrones* is an adaptation of the book series *A Song of Ice and Fire* by George R. R. Martin and is a fantasy fiction set in an imaginary land – ‘Westeros’. With five seasons of ten episodes each already finished, the show has millions of viewers in India itself and rising in popularity at a rapid pace.

It tells the stories of rivalry, superstition, slavery, magic, deposition, treachery, honor and courage knit into the background of a very long struggle between different fractions to establish sole right over the throne of the country. The amazing narrative and other techniques used entice viewers making it more and more popular. A serial like *Game of Thrones* is a perfect tool to covertly influence masses of viewers. Whatever is said through the characters and their actions have become accepted, hence, this unbridled influence should be critically examined.

The serial has undergone severe criticism for its depiction of violence, and casual treatment of nudity and perverted sexual acts. But less has been so far inquired about the cultural decent the serial has been introducing into the psyche of its millions of viewers in the third world countries. The social relevance of the naturalization of the violence and distorted sexual acts depicted in the serial is high. A very evident example that serials like these affect the consciousness of people is the response of youngsters in India to the US courts’ acceptance of same sex marriage. People in India welcomed this change by ~~rainbowing their profile pictures on Facebook. To follow the trajectory to see~~

where people in the third world got the courage to accept this so far intolerable idea, among several of other factors, we should also look into the two decade long influence of different American sitcoms and serials that flow to India. *Game of Thrones* has taken violence and perversion to an extreme level naturalizing rape, incest, forced sex, child sex, etc. As a product of artistic excellence the work is commendable, but its covert effect on people should be scrutinized thoroughly, objectively debated and theorized properly.

Even though so many of the media theories and psychoanalytic theories can explicate the reason for the inexorable passion of people to a certain kind of programs, nothing can possibly match the 'Uses and Gratifications Theory' or UGT put forward by Jay Blumler and James E. Katz in 1974. Unlike other media theories that focus on direct effect of media on society, UGT is an audience oriented theory that study why people choose a particular kind of media. The theory states that users are in control of their choice of media and they purposefully and consciously choose a certain kind of media to suit their emotional or intellectual needs whether it is escapism or information seeking. Most of the theorists explained this theory in a positive way favoring audience, giving them as well as the pictured media a priorte having a heuristic value. But the side of theory that talks about the role of audience to integrate into their own life the aspects of the content that influence them is not given the concern it demands.

The collective urge to watch an aggressive serial like *Game of Thrones* can be explained by using Uses and Gratifications Theory. This theory explains that people will always tend to choose media to satisfy their implicit needs whether it is the need to fulfill emotional wanting or intellectual curiosity. *Game of Thrones* provide material for emotion as well as intellect, thus, pleasing a wide range of audience.

The fact that people tend to choose media of their choice to meet their demands is confirmed. Now we have to look into the psychoanalytic theories of Freud that explain why people choose certain stimulus over the other. Freud says people will always tend to seek pleasure and try to avoid pain. Everyone

gives prior concern to their instincts more than reason. To satisfy biological and psychological needs, people tend to engage in activities those satisfy their instincts. The term '*Pleasure Principle*' explains this desire to seek what basic instincts want. Now our basic instincts will always drive us to enjoy violence, sex and passion. Civilizations from primitive times knew about this and were always formulating methods to check this. That's why religions and social institutions run a strict code to check any foreign influence provoking these instincts. Considering this, any foreign influence is possible only in a subtle and covert way aiming a change in the long run.

The influence of *Game of Thrones* in popular culture is tremendous. There is an accelerated pace in which it influences dressing, language and attitude of people towards different volatile concepts like love, sex, pride, valor, respect, etc.

The linguistic influence should be judged separately. Since any influence at the language level on a long run can reflect in the cultural standards eventually. Every piece of good literature and every writer at any point of time in the development of language's history is expected to contribute to the development of the language with vocabulary and usages. Shakespeare has contributed many, so has O. Henry.

Ever since digital media became a living room experience, influences through printed materials became scarce. Visual media became the carrier of these influencing aspects. Many of the major TV programs and movies of all times showed considerable tendency to influence people with their emotionally capturing story lines, narrative methods and as usual technical innovations.

If to the end of last century it was *Star Trek* series that brought *Klingon*, an invented language; in twenty first century *Lord of the Rings* brought into minds of people *Elvish* language. The recent Telugu super hit *Bahubali* also tried making a history by developing a language of its own. These languages show no in real world they enhance the mystery and power of these movies.

Game of Thrones introduces two different languages, one of not much importance *Dothraki*, but the other one *Valerian* is making its way into urban conversations rapidly with the epic phrases like ‘*Valor Murgholis*’ and ‘*Valar Darheris*’ which means “all men must die” and “all men must serve” respectively. The powerful situations created by the serial is no less than that of *Star Trek* and *Lord of the Rings* that these slogans are inspiring people for revenge, hedonism, Epicureanism and slavish adherence to what the instincts want us to do. It can be safely doubted whether the serial wants to promote consumerism and extreme kind of sluggishness.

Apart from an array of archaic English words, accented words and bizarre usages that the show has contributed to the accepted vocabulary, it has also added words people coined to describe the situations the drama creates at different points. ‘*Sexposition*’ is a new word added to English language in reference to the practice of showing obscene sexual imagery to the background of other events in the serial. The background is irrelevant but viewers are given an entirely different experience with this technique which shows off the power relations of the characters in forefront. American blogger *Myles McNutt* coined this term which was later accepted into English language.

Online stores like Amazon, Flipcart and eBay sell large number of products with pictures, dialogues and themes of this serial. With phone covers, dresses, costumes, printed mugs and wall clocks, slowly this serial is getting into the households of millions. Thus, the serial is increasing its popularity among people who are not watching it at the moment. Since all the seasons are available for download, and recommendations are high, it is getting into the masses as time passes.

As Westernized at standards of living are accepted, the style associated with it, the changes they make in their societies are also gradually accepted. There is nothing much to test this out about this in this ‘Global village’, because there are as many KFCs in India, that many Yoga centers are there in America. But we are talking about something more serious. What *Game of Thrones* is accused of is not just a covert Westernization; but the introduction of a pagan

society with its own cultural values. The problem is that the ways of the time pictured in the serial are not judged as the ways of that time but ways of all time. The strong emotional attachment the serial in its long run claims from us creates a big toll on cultural matrix.

People at the power in India are not unaware of the cultural influences of media. In fact, we are aides and a betters Sushma Swaraj in her tenure as Information and Broadcasting Minister not only declared film production as a company she also made Indian channels available for other countries overnight. She was not silent about her motive. She had openly mentioned that India can invade Pakistan culturally using different channels. It took so many years to make an evident change. After 2010s there was an onslaught of Indian media into Pakistan even at the midst of fundamental critics blaming the people bringing these changes.

We are invading Pakistan for sure, ideologically, and Pakistan media giants are helping us for this. The new Salman Khan movie, *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* tells a cross border story in a Bollywood fashion, the upcoming Shahrukh Khan movie, *Raees* has a Pakistani heroine, even though Shahrukh Khan is less bothered about cultural influence than creating a large fan base and audience in the neighboring country.

We have blocked airing of Pakistani channels in our country stating that they are providing wrong statistics about border disputes. But maybe radicalization of religion is also a paranoia that kept our rulers from airing those channels with no more than religious sermons, shayaris and news reports. Nowhere the chance for cultural influence is mentioned explicitly. It's ironic we believe in the power of media to offend but we either believe we are insulated to these stuff or don't mind about the changes happening over time.

Even when we believe in the power of media to influence masses abroad, we are least bothered about the changes we are undergoing at the time. The two decades long sit-coms that flowed in to India changed the mindset of educated Indians, especially those who studied in institutes of higher education where students of different regional, religious and ethnical background come

together. These students then took the fascination for these sit-coms to their homes, offices and friends increasing the number of viewers.

It's in 1990s the situational comedies slowly became a fascination among television viewers. It all started with *Friends*, a comic drama by David Crane made for Warner Bros, which portrayed the story of six friends that English speaking viewers got acquainted with a new mode of artistic and ideological expression. It's through the initial episodes of *Friends* for the first time Indian viewers or even some of the American and European viewers got acquainted with the idea of 'same sex marriage'. The notion of homosexuality at least at theoretical level is accepted among youngsters since it is they who get influenced by the American media more. At the time when the concept was introduced, the serial was in its growing stage, but in ten years of its run, it became an iconic serial and whatever is said in it became accepted due to its emotional appeal. Later it became a touchstone for the rest of the serials which poured into the third world.

In due course of time, serials like *How I Met Your Mother*, *Two and Half Men*, *Modern Family* and *Big Bang Theory* also made considerable difference in the aesthetics and societal judgment parameters of people. All these serials taught the target audience, in varying degrees, the cultural habits and ways of first world. Because of the technical excellence and narrative strategies adopted, these serials go on to become great successes. Since all these serials in the original format are available for download, people can access the uncensored versions easily.

Halies Game of Thrones was a sudden leap from a basic step paved by these sit-coms. The serial has everything to fascinate people; it adopts the same story narrated in George R. R. Martin's epic book series – *A Song of Ice and Fire* (a collection of seven books, two of which are yet to be released). The complex plot brings to us a fictitious account of War of Roses, Italian Romances, Arthurian legends and Celtic myths. The places where the stories are happening are also mentioned as fictitious – *Westeros* and *Esteros*. Considering *Westeros* as "west" and *Esteros* as "east", the serial's picturing of

former as a place where comparatively more civilized people live and the later as a place of pagans can be judged as purposeful. The Eurocentric ideology of West as the best and rest as waste is still in the subconscious of people who live in the memory of colonial legacy.

Already *Lord of the Rings* series have introduced viewers to a fictitious world – Middleearth, so it was rather easy to accept the different kind of world portrayed where living, dead and supernatural existed together. But the map provided of Westeros resembles Britain, this is no accident. Imperial motives are evident when we get the statistics of funds received by the producers from different government organizations. The financial agency of European Regional Development Fund and Invest NI together, Northern Ireland Screen' has given £9.25 million to *Game of Thrones* acknowledging that the show has increased the revenue through tourism. This is an openly announced donation but we are not sure whether the money is for the above said reason know whether any other agencies are behind the funding.

The serial has been naturalizing prostitution, rape, incest and licentiousness. Even the most serious taboo of the cultural world today - incest is treated mildly justifying it to the end of the fifth season. Every episode shows naked women, people talking in the background of others having sex (which has become a trend by itself-*Sexposition*) and most of the characters talk obscene all the time. Drinking is treated as a quite natural habit for anyone. There is no need to refer to a particular episode or season, since in all the episodes so far telecasted in all the seasons nudity, boozing and violence are treated with no sense of ethics.

The portrayal of women in the serial is also questionable. Women are most of the time pictured either as too weak or extremely villainous. Most of the women characters are shown as revengeful, manipulative and sexually excited. Even the strongest of the women pictured are engaging in random sex, incestuous relationships or extramarital relationships. Female sexuality is pictured as the tool to get things done for many people. Even brothers use their sisters as baits to get kingdoms back. The pilot episode (first episode of the

first season) shows a brother measuring up his sister's body to see whether she is good enough to entice a barbarian tribe leader so that he would get his (tribe leader's) help to get back the lost kingdom. Most of the major male characters engage in extra marital affairs and it is accepted by other characters. The serial in the long run redefines honor. The flowing concepts like masculinity, bravery and loyalty are also redefined.

According a detailed survey conducted by the *Dailybeast*, an online investigative magazine, the season three of the serial alone has thirty one instances of total nudity, eight instances of full-frontal nudity, seven instances of rear nudity, nine instances where breasts were shown and seven instances where male chests are pictured. The statistics is expected to go high for the coming seasons. The season five ends with one of the major characters, Cersilannister made to walk naked through the streets of the city. But it is no more counted as obscenity since sexual aggression and casual nudity have been naturalized and deemed fit for family viewing.

In the initial episodes when nudity was shown, there was a notion that it was just another HBO attempt to market the serial. But before the first season was over, nudity and violence got natural that every episode shows dozens of killings, at least two instances of nudity and frequent usage of obscene words. Since all these fit perfectly into the story line created viewers get pinned on to the show seldom doubting about the imperceptive changes happening among viewers. Halies opens a new landscape where any kind of perversion is gradually justified and naturalized.

The serial takes the viewers to the realm of the supernatural as well. 'Whitewalkers' are fictitious half human and zombie like creatures, the living are afraid of. The serial also shows dragons and giant dire wolves. When we look into our movies and demean them for lack of realism, we glorify the unrealistic representations of serials like these commending on their mastery to make the unbelievable convincing using their technical excellence. Again most of the technical works of these serials are done in animation forms in India.

While these situations are not debated properly or analyzed theoretically, and only casual references to the nudity and sentiments over the dead characters are made, *Game of Thrones* go on to be a hot subject in institutes of higher learning and among corporate youngsters, and millions of viewers are waiting for the next season (sixth season which is expected to come on March 2016) to come. The serial ended leaving people in utter surprise at three separate story lines hooking up millions of viewers to wait impatiently. While educated English speaking millions across the world wait for the next season, all we do is to hypocritically accuse our housewives for watching the dramas coming in regional channels. Meantime, the book sales are going high online and in bookstores across the world. Posters, toys, attires and key chains are also finding way into markets increasing its popularity among the so far uninfected people.

Though we are not against different artistic expression, we need to study and analyze the effect of this kind of serial in society. We need to have more theories on cultural invasion; there are only few observations about unconscious and gradual implanting of ideas through media or activities that might take our wholesome emotional and mental involvement, but we need to theorize more clearly what is it to teach and learn exploiting basic instincts of people. We need to find out whether this is a purposeful attempt by the first world to culturally extend its empire to our land.

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Desai's *Hullabaloo in a Guava Orchard*: A Post Colonial Reading

Anisha Kuriakose

Indians gained their independence in 1947, and the event, for fictionists provided more confidence for the blooming novel business. Fiction sprouts and grows under the pens of some notable novelists, such as Bhabani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar, Khushwant Singh, and J. Menon Marath. Besides, during this period, the growth of Indian women novelists writing in English enriches the dimension of Indian English writing. Ruth Praver Jhabvala, Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal and Anita Desai are the dominant examples. Moreover, after the 1960s some novelists began to turn their focus from public to private spaces because of the destruction and unrest since the World War Two. Novelists such as Anita Desai and Arun Joshi were concerned with personal anxiety and mental disorder.

After 1980, it was the period of new fiction; the prominent figures are Salman Rushdie, Shashi Deshpande, Shashi Tharoor, and Arundhati Roy. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1981), especially achieved great success, betokening a new era in the history of Indian writing in English. In recent times more and more Indian English writers have been showcasing their ingenious works like *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) by Kiran Desai and *The White Tiger* (2008) by Aravind Adiga, who both won the Booker Prize. Indian English fiction is gradually more in the spotlight because of these outstanding writers, and is acquiring a literary position in the world similar to its Western counterpart.

Kiran Desai, an Indian-American writer, was born in 1971 in New Delhi, India. She spent her childhood there before moving to England when she was 14. After a transient stay in England for a year, she immigrated with her family to the United States, where she finished her schooling in the state of Massachusetts. Later Desai entered Bennington College, Hollins University and then Columbia University for further study of creative writing. She took two years off to write her debut novel, *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*.² Kiran Desai painted the plain and quirky characters in this novel, and it was published in 1998. The novel brought her to literary attention, winning the Betty Trask Award. Desai's second book *The Inheritance of Loss*, taking her eight years to finish, was presented to the public in 2006. Dealing with the theme of postcolonial struggles, the novel won the 2006 Man Booker Prize, and Desai is the youngest female winner ever. In 2007 the novel won another fiction award from National Book Critics Circle.

HGO depicts a marvelous incident in a small town in India, Shahkot. Sampath, the leading role of the story, works at the back desk in the Shahkot post office. Sampath is quite unharmonious with his surroundings, so he invariably dreams of a place that comforts and belongs to him. People look down on Sampath, and he always disappoints his father. Sampath gets fired because he messes all up on the wedding day preparations for his commanding officer's daughter. After that, one day he leaves his life behind, running out and passing through the streets, and arriving in a guava orchard. Sampath climbs up a special guava tree and lives there. Surprisingly, he remembers the contents from the letters he had read in the post office, accidentally beginning the Sermon in the Guava Tree. Out of Sampath's expectation, he becomes famous and is deemed as a man with unfathomable wisdom.

The pilgrims who hunger Going through the boom period of the Latin-American novels in the late 1950s and 1960s, find magical realism fiction taking root in the currency of modern literature. As its blurred position in the mainstream literary traditions, magical realist writings are historically deemed as writings on the margin. However, these marginal writings, gradually claiming

a “monumentalizing category” in progressing literary practice, give off their influences for postcolonial countries. In Stephen Slemon’s opinion, a text like these, strongly associated with marginal cultures, “carries a residuum of resistance toward the imperial center and to its totalizing systems of generic classification”. Being a “speaking mirror,” thematized by Gabriel García Márquez in *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, these magical elements on the one hand enable us to recognize, in an outward direction, the presence of postcolonial literature and its “postcolonial social relations;” and on the other, they inwardly reflect the thematic content of works, leading out “an interplay between language and thematic network” . In this light, in the following part, theories of Stephen Slemon in his essay “Magic Realism as Postcolonial Discourse” will be applied to further analyze the novel.

Slemon generalizes three separate but related features in analyzing these magical realist texts from a postcolonial point of view. At first, Slemon maintains that the texts involve “the representation of a kind of transformational regionalism so that the site of the text, though described in familiar and local terms, is metonymic of the postcolonial culture as a whole”. In *HGO*, Desai presents the transformational regionalism in Sampath’s adages, consisting of the appearance of things and daily observations in Indian life: ‘When the buffaloes fight, the crops suffer,’ the crowd continued. ‘It is a hard winter when dogs eat dogs. Every cock fights best on his own dunghill. Puff not against the wind. Talk of chalk and hear about cheese!’

However, Desai attempts to reforge the stereotypical English proverb in a “monkeyish” way, emblematic of Indian tradition, for the purpose of resisting a kind of ingrained, postcolonial culture. When Mr. Gupta gives the CMO a quick briefing about the turbulent situation, he claims:

In this case we might say, “One bad monkey spoils the others.” ‘But, sir,’ shouted someone in the listening crowd, inspired by Mr. Gupta’s little witticism, ‘can you really teach an old monkey new tricks?’

These readapted proverbs which are originally derived from Indian dailies and observation on natural things demonstrate a pursuit of ancestral

properties in postcolonial literature, trying to re establish internal, regional attributes damaged by external colonialism. Furthermore, it contains “the foreshortening of history so that the time scheme of the novel metaphorically contains the long process of colonization and its aftermath” . In the text Desai does not include the long process of colonial history, but symbolically draws its aftermath with an enduring summer heat period. To rethink the drought and the monsoon as postcolonial implications has their legitimate cultural references. Lamb points out that “for most of India, most of the year, the oppression of the heat is inescapable” . The heat accompanied with a gloom envelops the spirits of Indians in the beginning of the novel, drying up the unaided, oppressed state of minds in weary lives that need spiritual irrigation. At the time Sampath is born monsoon brings rain to alleviate the nihilistic spirits of Indians: “Soon the storm would end and the world would grow silent and fragrant” .

At last, Slemon argues that these magical realist texts are apt to demonstrate “a preoccupation with images of both borders and centers and to work toward destabilizing their fixity”. In *HGO*, the image of borders ranges over the presentation of individuals, families, and society. They effectively launch the resistance against the image of centers, and destabilize the solid relation between the borders and the centers. Individually, taking the Chawla family for example, Mr. Chawla as a patriarchal center strongly displays a dissatisfied opinion of his family: “What is the matter with this family? I am the only one with any sense of responsibility.” (*HGO* 26)

The most important thing in this society is to maintain the fame of a family. In opposition to Mr. Chawla, Sampath is an exemplum of the border under his father’s patriarchal reign. To some extent, the definite demarcation between the border and the center is destabilized when Sampath grabs his fortuitous opportunity in the orchard. The fixity is disturbed due to his religious image, a much mightier center in India. When Sampath’s position on the guava tree is made sure, the solid relation between the border and the center becomes fragile and destructible:

How they had scolded him once upon a time for every little things he had done. Now here he was waving at them as if he were a raja wishing to be left alone. Also, the vulnerable relationship further emerges between families. The Chawla family at the beginning seems to be despised in the eyes of others: “What is going on there? All kinds of bizarre happenings in that household always”. Among family, discrimination is a common recognized situation, and Desai implies the resistance is faintly visible. Through a thirst for promoting their status in the society, Mr. Chawla capitalizes on his son’s reputation to reverse their inferior situation, and they are acknowledged in different position. For example, when Pinky bites the Hungry Hop’s ear, she is escorted home instead of being punished: “the police were not going to upset the family of one of the town’s most respected personages”. The Chawla family explains this fragile relationship between borders and centers. At first they are a normal family, disdained by the villagers, and promoted to a higher position in the orchard, being the center of this little utopian society. But in the end, the departure of Sampath probably drives his family to return to an ordinary status as before.

Furthermore, the rebuilding of the guava orchard stands for an exploration beyond the territories of civilization, and a small society is formed inside the orchard. The orchard itself symbolizes the border, and its serenity is inevitably interfered by the outsiders coming from the imperial order, a much bigger, patriarchal society. Take commercialism, the most apparent disturbance, as an instance. It is a cultural commodity left over by colonialism and envisaged as an image of center. By means of the capitalistic propaganda, the orchard as a marginal image turns into a central hallowed place among the Shahkotians: “Thus, ensconced in his orchard bower . . . Sampath gave what came to be known as The Sermon in the Guava Tree”. As a place newly centralized, the orchard, established on the land along the border, seems to stand in opposition to the imperial structure. The hallowed orchard emerges in a pestilential atmosphere after capitalism breaks in; however, Sampath’s escape from home enables the orchard to resist the capitalistic values, a system rife with rules and

regulations. The sacred orchard, as a source of prosperity, eventually is also furnished with rules and regulations, such as visiting hours that limit access, and becomes a center itself. The hullabaloo caused by the monkey-catching action also explains the destabilization between the two societies. Thus the solid relationship between borders and centers fall apart, the guava orchard eventually becomes part of the system.

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Theories of Nation and the Concept of India

Sajin P J

The nation is a problematic entity. It evades simple definitions. Jawaharlal Nehru was not being fanciful when he used the word “discovery” in the title of his famous book, *Discovery of India*. It was one of the books in which Nehru was trying to delineate the contours of a nation in the making. Whether he was aware of it or not, Nehru’s was an all-inclusive assumption which binds all theoretical discourses on nation and nationalism.

A nation is always discovered. It is imagined. The nation is discovered most often from the past, sometimes from the present and sometimes from the future. In order to distinguish themselves from other political communities, nations often engage in comparisons. These comparisons deal with both the social and economical “presentness” of a nation with that of another. This is an example for the discovery of a nation from the present. An exhortation about scientific progress that a nation expects to achieve in a hundred years is part of discovering the nation from the future.

The nation is imagined by the citizens. It is simultaneously static and dynamic. The static nature of it corresponds to the identifiable physical boundaries of the nation. These physical boundaries are fixed and one needs force to change it; but of course always with severe consequences.

All cultural and social institutions of a nation relentlessly work to keep the imagination about the boundaries intact in the minds of its citizens. Thus the news of infiltration by a neighbouring country to any border state in India can cause serious security concerns for Keralites living in the deep south, thousands of kilometres away from the actual boundary. They might feel that somebody has entered into their private property without consent. The same

will be the feeling of an Indian citizen in the diaspora. Here, what we see is the nation transcending its physical boundaries to merge with the memories of the diaspora, thereby, revealing its dynamism. Members of a particular nation can carry these imaginations with them to whatever distances they travel. They can, from anywhere, think about it, feel proud of it, feel content about its being and boast about their membership in it. The nation continues to exist even when an individual who shares the nationness dies. This is why nation is called trans-individual. Thus, nation is a transcending reality imagined constantly.

For Hugh Seton-Watson “a nation exists when a significant number of people in a community consider themselves to form a nation, or behave as if they formed one” (5). Steven Grosby also has the same opinion. According to him, it is a “social relation of collective self-consciousness” (10). To Benedict Anderson,

It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. (6)

Nations emerge as a result of numerous social, cultural and historical processes and so it is futile to attempt to locate the precise moment of the birth of a nation. Any enquiry into it will reveal that the explorer is dealing with an uneven process of “understanding . . . the self involved in the always historically complex formation of a shared self-understanding, a collective self-consciousness” (Anderson 20). No matter whether it is a colony or a coloniser, the birth of every nation is preceded by a long period of incubation. They are not born on a particular point in time, but are formed over a period in history.

Coming to different theoretical approaches to the nation, one can see that all of them revolve around the exact period of the nation’s evolution. Some say that it is a construct of the period of modernity, while some others argue that it emerged even before the dawn of modernity. Many historians attribute the nation’s birth to the French Revolution which supplanted “dynastic loyalties with the idea of popular sovereignty, [and] transformed passive subjects

into active and self-governing citizens” (Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism* 1). Even though the concept of nation seems thoroughly modern, it is still a controversial subject. The debates between Primordialists, Modernists and Ethnicists reveal this controversy more clearly. Nations establish themselves by employing two different yet analogous defining strategies. On the one hand it acts as the political site of modernity which gives its citizens accessibility to various opportunities like public education, employment and political office and also gives them participation in its scientific fortune. On the other hand, they “legitimize themselves by claiming descent from ancient communities, and the nation-building project is formulated by nationalists in terms of ‘revival’” (Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism* 2). Thus, the revival of “‘historic’ names, symbols, languages, heroes, and cultural practices” are common in every nation building process across the world (Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism* 2). Both these are deliberate attempts at generating a feeling of “nationness” in the minds of the citizens.

The narratives of the nation are interwoven with memories of the past. The theoreticians who hold that the nation has an existence well before the modern era of nationalism come under the category of Primordialists. For them the past is the story of nations engaging in a continuous process of self-realization and, as Hutchinson points out,

These nations are primordial entities embedded in human nature and history that were objectively identifiable through their distinctive way of life (e.g. through language, history, education, religion), their attachment to a territorial homeland, and their striving for political autonomy. (*Modern Nationalism* 3)

Johan Huizinga’s perception of national consciousness as evolving throughout the medieval period throws light on the general ambience of the Primordialist argument (Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism* 3). Marc Bloch held the opinion that national consciousness was already in vogue in England, France and Germany from the year 1100 onwards (Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism* 3). Hugh Seton-Watson argued that in Europe there was a “gradual elaboration

. . . of a sense of nationality” (Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism* 3) from the time of the barbarian invasions onwards. Even while the Primordialists recognized that nationality was subordinate to religious and dynastic principles before the eighteenth century, their argument was that nations existed well before the modern era of nationalism (Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism* 3).

E. J. Hobsbawm in his famous book *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*, however, makes it clear that before the nineteenth century the term “nation” in European cultures had no political connotations. He also argues that before the eighteenth century there was no conception that sharing a common language had any social or political implications (14-15). This is the modernist view on nationalism.

According to Hutchinson, “five important points of discontinuity” can be traced between the Modernists and the Primordialists. Firstly, for the Modernists “the nation can be understood only by reference to its goal, a *nation-state* whose legitimacy in turn rests on the will of ‘the people’ constituted as the body of citizens” (Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism* 4). Previously, societies were governed by monarchs whose powers rested on the religious belief in God-given superiority. They were considered as representatives of God on earth. But as a result of the Enlightenment, the concept about the people changed to that of a rational entity capable of self government. This gave them a central position in the discourse on the nation or, in other words, initiated the enfranchisement of the masses. This shift happened only in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and so for the Modernists, the nation is strictly a modern construct.

Secondly, “nations differ territorially from previous political units in their size and degree of consolidation” (Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism* 4). The emergence of the modern bureaucratic state and the market economy wiped out regional and local loyalties and inaugurated a wider network of interaction. The Modernists consider this as the main cause for the drastic change in the size of the nation.

Thirdly, modern nations engage in a process of “othering” in order to define themselves. They vigorously rely on ethnic homogeneity. Usually ethnic minorities began to be considered as threats to the integrity of the territorial states. So, “nations, when they form nation-states are strikingly different from earlier units in being based on the principle that political and ethnic boundaries should be congruent” (Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism* 5). The Indian nation did this “othering” to the Dalits, Adivasis, women and the minorities in order to define itself. Fourthly, Hutchinson points out that the modern nations are imaginable. He uses Anderson’s theoretical concept of the “imagined communities” for this division. For Anderson, the nation

is an imagined political community—imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. (6)

Hutchinson writes,

The nation is an anonymous, socially differentiated and large-scale collectivity, unified by a ‘high’ literate and scientific culture based on a single and distinctive vernacular language. By contrast, premodern societies were localized, small-scale kinship groups marked by high rates of illiteracy and by cultural heterogeneity. (*Modern Nationalism* 5)

Hutchinson’s argument for the need of a “single and distinctive vernacular language” for defining a nation fails in the case of India. In India no such single vernacular acted as a connecting force for defining the nation and on the contrary several different languages did contribute to the imagination of India as a nation also.

Lastly, modern “nations are industrial societies with a high degree of economic integration throughout the territory” (Hutchinson, *Modern Nationalism* 5). They give large-scale opportunities for middle class societies

and hence the new nation is a necessity for them. They try hard to keep the nation intact, shielding it from all external attacks. In contrast, pre-modern agrarian societies had no such integrating national class, and this is the major difference between the two.

Theoreticians such as John Armstrong and Anthony D. Smith hold the opinion that nations should be analysed on the basis of ethnicity. They try to contextualise the emergence of nations within the larger phenomenon of ethnicity which shaped them. By ethnicity they mean myths, symbols, cultural practices, and the like. At the same time, they object to the Primordialist positions on the nation's pedigree also. For them it is not a modern artefact. Even while accepting some of the modern traits of the nation like citizenship, they argue that the birth of the nation needs to be traced to a distant past. They reject the Modernists' attempt to over-emphasise citizenship as the core of nation and nationality. As Hutchinson concludes, for the Ethnicists

The nation is thus an ethno-cultural community shaped by shared myths of origins, a sense of common history and way of life, and particular ideas of space, that endows its members with identity and purpose. (*Modern Nationalism* 7)

As we have seen earlier, all these theoreticians differ in fixing the time of the birth of the nation. Except for the Primordialists, all others agree that the nation is not an eternal phenomenon which will last forever and they also agree that in one way or the other it is a construct. They have different views on what constitutes its building blocks. While Anderson credits print capitalism, Smith gives importance to myths and other cultural practices.

Given these theoretical perceptions, the emergence of the Indian nation is slightly problematic. In India, nationalism emerged in response to colonialism and feudalism. It was actually a product of anti-colonial and anti-feudal awakening. Even while accepting modernity in some fields, the Indian nation was critical of colonial modernity and its attendant industrialisation. When Gandhi advised Indians to boycott foreign clothes, it was also a rejection of industrialisation. But when he travelled across India in a third class train

compartment to “understand” the nation, he was in fact making use of the mobility offered by colonial modernity. The ambivalence of accepting and rejecting changes simultaneously for their own benefits can be seen as a peculiar trait of the Indian middle class throughout history.

Two aspects of the modernist understanding are valid for the Indian nation also. The process (also a project) of identifying an other for defining and distinguishing the nation is the primary aspect. This universal trait of the modern nation is true in India’s case also.

From the early stages of the imagination of the Indian nation itself it has been conceived as an upper-caste, male-oriented, middle-class Hindu nation having its roots in the Vedic past. The minorities, the Dalits and the Adivasis have no space in this imagination and the women are always bestowed with an extra burden of saving the nation’s honour. This is the logic behind the concept of “Mother India.” It places an extra burden on the already marginalized women community and restricts their free mobility.

The exclusion of the marginalised does not only mean a total banishment of these identities but also the appropriation and misappropriation perpetrated on their narratives by the power holders. Various narratives of the Dalits, the Adivasis and women throughout India are co-opted into the national imagination, robbing them of their revolutionary potential and thereby subjugating them under the common yet controversial term “nationalism.”

Like other modern nations, conscious avoidances and appropriations are part of the Indian nation also. It warrants the amnesia of its citizens about certain “unwanted” categories of India’s social, cultural and political body. Ernest Renan in his essay “What Is a Nation?” observes that “Forgetting . . . is a crucial factor in the creation of a nation” (Bhabha 11). E. V. Ramakrishnan in his book *Desheeyathakalum Sâhithyavum* (Nationalities and Literature) argues that “Discourses of nationality justify themselves by constructing ‘others.’ In its memories, there are serious cases of amnesia” (62; translation mine). The Indian nation repeats these arguments in every juncture of its constitution.

Another aspect of the Indian nation is its middle-class identity. Pavan K. Varma in his book *The Great Indian Middle Class* elaborates on the middle class nature of the Indian nation. He refers in this context to the famous speech of Jawaharlal Nehru delivered on the eve of 15 August 1947. On that day when India emerged out of its colonial slumber to become a free nation, Nehru as the first Prime Minister of independent India addressed the nation in a language which a majority of Indians were unable to understand.

He was speaking in English. Even though Nehru was addressing the nation, only a small section of the society could understand him. He made sense to the middle-class nation only. In his autobiography Nehru admits that he belongs to the bourgeois class. He writes, "My politics had been those of my class, the bourgeoisie" (*An Autobiography* 48). Nehru, being a member of the bourgeois class, was unable to control the tendency to use the coloniser's language even on such an important occasion.

English, apart from being the coloniser's language, was an ideological tool for the Indian middle class to justify their supremacy. They used it to define themselves and also to get hold of the new national space formed as a result of anti-colonial struggles. Their access to English helped them appropriate the narrations of the nation and reshape them to suit their needs, marginalising in the process large sections of the society. Using English thus became an act of controlling the nation.

The Indian nation has always been middle class in nature and is still following the same path. It is very important to note that this middle class is upper caste in terms of morality and value system. It grabbed its prominence through appropriations and a conscious othering of various marginal narratives.

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The Role of Ethnicity in the Adaptation of Shakespearean Plays in Indian Films

Nimmy Maria Abraham & C. Kannan

Adaptation of Shakespearean plays is not something new in Indian films. Shakespearean plays are digestible only to that group of educated class in India, who has some interest in literature. The popular films adapt the plays in terms of a visual language and cultural context familiar to the Indian audience. Thus, the films democratize art. The relevance of folk culture lies here. A process of merging global with the local can be seen in these adaptations. In other words, the global contributes to the local and vice versa. This paper is a study on these mutual contributions in films. The focus of the paper is on two films, *Kaliyattam*, a Malayalam adaptation of *Othello* and, *Ramleela Goliyon Ki RaasLeela*, a Hindi adaptation of *Romeo and Juliet*. “Film and literature are both the products of culture and the producers of culture.” (Jain 3). *Kaliyattam* is a product of culture and *Ramleela*, is a producer of a dominant culture. The story of Shakespearean play represents the global and the ethnicity in the films represents the local. The adaptations in the films are centered on folk culture. It is stated that “Popular Indian cinema has attracted a considerable amount of attention as the site of an authentic folk culture, from anthropologists and ideologists or others employing the tools of those disciplines.” (Prasad 15).

Kaliyattam is a 1997 film directed by Jayaraj Rajasekharan Nair. The narration of *Kaliyattam*, is built around “Theyyam”, a religious ritual art form in Kannur and Kasaragod districts of Kerala. The word ‘Theyyam’ means God. It is usually performed by certain indigenous communities such as Panan,

Vannan, Velan and Malayan (Payyanad). Theyyam performers get a voice only when they transform to god during the performance. In the movie, the protagonist belongs to Malaya community. Malayans are occupied as Theyyam performers, magicians and midwives for higher caste people. M. P. Damodaran mentions about the hearsay that inter caste marriage and elopement are common among Malayans. This might be a generalized assumption of the society because, intercast marriage and elopement is common all over the world. The movie gives an insight in to the marginalization and the prejudiced beliefs created by the caste system.

The life and the problems of a theyyam artist are conveyed effectively in the movie. It is not just an adaptation, but a representation of the culture and features of a society to which the play is adapted. The story in the movie begins with the elopement of the protagonist Kannan (*Othello*), a Malayan, with his lover Thamara (*Desdemona*), who belongs to a Kshatriya sub- caste. Thamara's father gets shocked as she eloped with a lower caste man. The father feels dishonoured on his daughter's marriage with a Malayan. The attitude of her father reflects the rules and norms of caste system prevailing in Kerala. Her father accuses Kannan, based on the prejudiced belief that Malayans bewitch people. Apart from the views of other characters in *Othello*, the protagonist also expresses himself as an outsider due to his colour. Similarly, in the film, Kannan makes references to his deformity of pock marked face and problems faced by him as a theyyam performer, especially during "Kanalattom". Performing "Theyyam" on ember is called "Kanalattom". Thus Malayan represents those marginalized sects whose personal miserable life has remained unnoticed. They are 'Daivam' (God) only during their performance. "Theyyam" as a cultural institution is controlled by the upper castes. Kannan was performing Theyyam when Thamara's father meets him just after the elopement. The father remains calm as Malayan is transformed in to god during "Theyyam". He says "daivam is not to be attacked". His words also imply his authority over Perumalayan when he is not in the Theyyam attire. Perumalayan is the official name given to the leading performer in "Theyyam" by Arakkal Kovilakam

(the head of north Malabar) (Payyanad). In *Othello*, the titular hero is the other due to his racial difference whereas in *Kaliyattam*, the hero is differentiated due to his lower caste compared to the caste of his wife. According to Raghavan Payyanad, “Kaliyattam” is controlled by caste system and hierarchy of caste. (29). A final decision is made by the Vazhunnor (local ruler) by justifying the case after listening to the father and the eloped couple. He gives sanction to the relationship of Thamara and Malayan by acknowledging their genuine love.

Within the participants in Theyyam, a hierarchical structure can be identified. In *Kaliyattam*, the envy of Paniyan(Iago) is due to his identity as a comic character in Theyyam. He is very much conscious of his identity as a Paniyan. He wants to usurp the role of “Theechamundi” (performer on fire) played by Perumalayan. He is also envious of Kaanthan (Cassio) for his higher post among the members working for “Theyyam”. In the play, Iago is subordinate to Othello in his official post in the army. He is considering himself as racially superior to Othello. He mocks Othello for his physical features which make him different from other Venetians. In the film, Paniyan is considering himself as inferior to others, especially Perumalayan. He always addresses Kannan in his official name Perumalayan.

The second half of the film in which Perumalayan seriously suspects Thamara as committing adultery is set in the season of “Perumkaliyaatam”. Theyyam played in an interval of 12 years or more is called “Perumkaliyattam” (Payyanad). The context of “Perumkaliyattam” expresses the significance of the plot. Vratam, a vow to practice fasting and celibacy is to be taken by the performer during “Perumkaliyattam”. The meaning of the word ‘vrata’ is self control that represents purity. Kannan reminds Thamara to take vratam. It is believed that the wife of a Theyyam performer should also take vratam for his safety during the performances like Kanalattom. Vratam is employed ironically in the context of suspicion of Kannan over his wife. Vratam also shows the commitment of wife towards her husband and that of the performer’s to Theyyam. For a Theyyam performer, vratam can be extended to seven days according to the significance of god (Payyanad 41). In “Perumkaliyattam”,

the performer takes seven days of vratam. Till the completion of Vratam, the Theyyam performer is not supposed to exit the premises of Kavu (sacred grove) (Payyanad 41). The vratam taken by Kannan shows seven days of separation from Thamara. The season of “Perumkaliyattam” is shown with the background of a song sung by the singers as part of the festival in the season. The song is about Kathivanoor Veeran and his wife Chemmarathi. The miserable situation of Kannan and Thamara is presented along with the song. Kathivanoor Veeran is the god known for offering justice to the legal issues of the devotees (Payyanad). So the song on Kathivanoor Veeran echoes the tension of suspicious Kannan on the illegal affair of Thamara. Paniyan also is in need of justice. Paniyan’s jealousy is a form of revenge against the injustice of marginalization.

Surrealism is used to show the inner pain when Kannan perceives the ocular evidence. He laments to all Theyyam gods. The scene is shot in a high angle to show his helpless situation. The gods in the form of Theyyam appear together and fade away. He is completely dependent on Theyyam gods. Perumalayan asking a solution to Paniyan is also shot in a high angle and a reverse shot of Paniyan in low angle imply the control gained by Paniyan over Perumalayan. The irony in this shot is that, though Paniyan is inferior to Perumalayan in his post, the whole life of Perumalayan is controlled by Paniyan. Unni Thambran (Roderigo) belonging to the same cast of Thamara also becomes a puppet in the hands of Paniyan. Thus the film can be seen as mocking at the futility of hierarchical nature of caste system. The power of Paniyan over Perumalayan and UnniThambran can be interpreted as carnivalisation of institutionalized caste system.

Kannan enters the chamber of Thamara with partially done make up of Theyyam. In the makeup, he represents the punishing god for murdering her. His appearance in the bedchamber with the makeup shows how his personality is changed from a husband to a punisher. Her lifeless hand moving down from his face is shown in close up. As the punishing god, Kannan breaks the limbs of Paniyan and makes him to lead a miserable life. In the play, Iago is executed legally. In the film, Perumalayan in the make up represents the god who

possesses the divine authority for determining the fate of Iago. After asking forgiveness to Kaanthan, he commits suicide by running to the fire-pile set for the performance, in the full attire of Theyyam. The last scene is shown as if he is performing within the flame. So Theyyam was significant throughout the film. Death and violence is inevitable in the plot of *Othello*. Perumkaliyattam is performed at mid night which is in parallel with the murder scene in the play with the setting at night. Thus the movie *Kaliyattam* is meaningless without the cultural context of *Theyyam*. The name of the film echoes the theme of the story. *Kaliyattam* is the performance representing goddess Kali or her variant forms. In Hindu mythology, death, violence and destruction of evil are attributed to Kali. In the end, Kannan represents Kali who decides the fate of both Thamara and Paniyan.

Goliyon Ki Raasleela, Ram - Leela is a 2013 Bollywood film directed by Sanjay Leela Bhansali. Bollywood films have a major role in popularizing folk cultures. The film is set in a Gujarati ethnic culture. The ethnic culture is commodified in the film without expressing its essence. Garba is a folk dance in Gujarat, which is shown in the film as an alternative to the ball dance scene in *Romeo and Juliet*. Garba represents a culture which has been hailed to a level of dominance over other ethnic cultures. South Indian women prefer wearing North Indian ghagra similar to the costume of Garba for wedding and other ceremonies as Bollywood has become a trend setter all over India.

The movie is the reflection of how an ethnic culture got influenced by the globalized culture. *Ram Leela* starts with the long shot of a Gujarati village. The main features of the fictional village is introduced in the beginning itself. The whole village is known for its illegal manufacture of guns and, murdering in the public has become an ordinary incident in the daily life. Violence has become more prominent than the love depicted in *Romeo and Juliet*. Ram (Romeo) is introduced as a member of Rajadi Khantaan (a clan) who is not interested in the fight with Sanera Khantaan unlike his other family members. The adaptation of the play is apt for Bollywood films because, according to M. Madhava Prasad, the feudal family romance remains the same as ever in Hindi

film industry though the genre has gone through many changes (30). Ram is introduced with a Hindi pop song which has been enacted and sung by him. The song is used as a tool to describe the nature of Ram. The song with cinematic steps with a large group is mainly intended to show heroism by expressing masculinity and sensuality to catch the attention of the viewers. In other words, the song is an example of culture industry and globalized culture. Madhava Prasad explains the general nature of feudal romance in Hindi Films as “a version of the romance narrative, a comedy track, an average of six songs per film, as well as a range of familiar character types” (Prasad 31). According to him, feudal family romance stands for melodrama and glamorous world of popular culture. The celebration of showing the events of introducing the hero and heroine and their love with a huge load of music adds melodrama to the film. It is a platform like stage shows in which the fans go crazy for their popular artist. The long shot of village girls taking the photos of Ram in their cell phones while he shows off his body, reflects how a remote ethnic community got adapted to the current trends of the world. Ram runs a store selling DVDs of porn films. The duet song set in the shop for showing the romance of Ram and Leela with cinematic steps shows how other media like MTV, a television channel, influence a film with an ethnic background. “MTV music video genre has had an immense effect on films all over the world, from the high concept of Flashclave to Bollywood.” (Lacey 55)

The head of the Sanera clan, an elderly woman, who is called BaaHujoor, is shown in close up in her first appearance. Baa means mother and Hujoor means lord. The extreme close up scene of massaging her feet by a servant shows her power over others. The scene implies the authority of a feudal head. A police sitting beneath her with obedience can be seen as a satire on the government who are puppets in the hands of feudal lords. Law is determined by the dominant family. The film is moulding the mind of audience to accept such a power. The dominance of a particular family is not at all questioned anywhere in the film. BaaHujoor confirms the marriage of Leela with an NRI. Even though he is an educated archaeologist, power and authority gains control

over him. For the NRI, the village including the feudal family is the other distanced from the modern educated people. The reply of BaaHujoor in English with Gujarati slang that they are smugglers when asked about her profession shows that her clan is not inferior to any modern trend.

Ram meets Leela for the first time in the Holi festival which is similar to the feast scene in the play. The time period of action spans from the season of Holi to the final day of Vijayadashami. Holi is called the festival of love. The festival as a setting is apt for their budding love. Vijayadashami is the celebration of truth over evil which supports the theme of love vs. enmity in the film. Thus film has a setting based on Hinduism from the beginning to the end. The non diegetic music along with the close up shot conveys the love at first sight when they face each other with the real gun in Leela's hand and the gun for spraying colour liquid in Ram's. Gun is a main object in the film. Their first meeting holding revolver foreshadows their suicide by shooting each other. The power of heroine as a feudal heiress in her locality is shown when everybody shouts Holi greetings by hearing the shot from her gun. The film is not about the ethnic life of a community but deals only with the actions of the dominant class within the setting of ethnicity.

The images with gaudy settings are given more importance to make it appealing to the senses of the viewers. The passive viewers consider themselves as inferior to the main characters presented in the film. The 'darsan' structure of Hindi feudal family romance consists of "the divine image, the worshipper and the mediating priest." (Prasad 75). The grand shot expressing the power of characters stand for the divine image, viewers worship them with the support of the techniques adopted in the film as the mediating priest. The status of feudal romance and the attitude of devotees or viewers are demonstrated in the excerpt given below:

The devotees' muteness is a requirement of the entire process. The devotees' look, moreover, is not one that seeks to locate the divinity, to inspect it and be assured of its existence. It is not a look of verification but one that demonstrates its faith by seeing

the divinity where only its image exists and by asking to be seen in turn.... The object of the darsanic gaze is a superior, a divine figure or a king who presents himself as spectacle of dazzling splendor to his subjects, the 'praja' or people (Prasad 75-76).

The situation of Hindi films can be described as "what Marx calls the 'heterogeneous' form of manufacture in which the whole is assembled from parts produced separately by specialist, rather than being centralized around the processing of a given material, as in serial or organic manufacture" (Prasad 32). The ethnic setting is only one among many parts in the film.

Ram who is called Kaam dev (Lord Cupid) by others in the film, turns to some one of a serious temper when his brother was killed by Leela's brother. The death of the major people is lamented in both the families with the setting of heavy rain and thunder in dim light. The setting and music add to the seriousness of action. In the second half of the film, Ram is crowned as head of the clan by his father. Ram addresses himself as the Don of Rajadi. It is from this scene that Ram's personality changes to a more violent one of heroic nature. He starts wearing traditional dress that shows the shift in his personality. Just after the enthronement there is an item number by Bollywood actress Priyanka Chopra to add 'masala' to the film. The song has nothing to do with the continuity of the film or with the ethnic context. Prasad opined:

The system of film songs has an autonomous existence, as we have seen, and so do the dialogue and the star image. This means that the process of commodification operates along lines that are determined by an unevenly -developed market capitalism, fragmenting the film text into its component parts. Thus the individual films tend to function more as a space for the exhibition of a combination of autonomous talents or values. (48).

The enmity between both the clans reaches its intensity as the sister in laws of both Ram and Leela are being attacked as part of revenge taken by each clan. Revenge motif is more prominent than romantic love. That is why the plot of second half of the film is entirely different from *Romeo and Juliet*. The

extra shots of violence and attacks in the film which is not there in the play shows the prominence of revenge motif to include fast moving scenes so that the audience can be made passive without giving a single second for their own thought on the film. The heroism of Ram is shown when he enters the house of Sanera without their permission and performs a one man show by having a heavy fighting scene with sound effects. It is the first time he meets BaaHujoor face to face and utters his courageous words for the safety of women from the attack of Sanera. She invites him to Navaratri festival which is also considered as a day for honoring womanhood. The setting of Navaratri is apt for the purpose of Ram to use his voice for the women. A song with Garba dance and, Leela as the prominent dancer is played in front of Baa Hujoor and her chief guest Ram. The song is giving a mythical reference to the sacred bond between Ram and Seetha which is apt for the theme of the film.

The twist in the scene happens when Leela's brother directs the gun towards Baa Hujoor which was meant to focus on Ram. She is paralyzed after the attack. With the support of others in the clan, Leela becomes the head of the clan. Ram, with a political leader, meets Leela for a peace treaty. The political leader needs their support for his success in election. The welfare of the whole society is based on these two leading families. Leela turns to be a powerful ruler and decides the business routes and affairs and bans any kind of exchange between both the clans. The twist in the personality of Leela similar to her authoritative mother makes the film different from *Romeo and Juliet* in which the identity of hero and heroine remains throughout the play. Ram attains the ethnic identity when he is promoted as the Rajadi Don.

In the celebration of Vijayadashami, the actors in the cast of Lord Sri Ram and other major characters are carried in chariots through the city to the battle place where the giant effigy of Ravana is to be burned. Ram as the announcer in the midst of the devotees can be interpreted as enacting the role of Lord Sri Ram who was born for destroying the evil. The extreme long shot of the scene with Ram as the prominent person is for the glorification of the hero along with Lord Sri Ram. In introducing the song also, Ram is presented with an

extreme long shot and a crowd dancing behind him. The name of the film also refers to the religious folk drama *RamLila* which narrates the story of Sri Ram in Narayana.

The film shows the image of ethnic community as smugglers, not having their independent voice and as addicted to sexual desires. They blindly follow the system made by the head of the clans. Friends of Ram who spend most of their time watching pornographic films represent the common people in the clan. *Romeo and Juliet* has given space for all classes of a society whereas the film failed to show the real life of society by forgetting the common people to have a suitable role in the film. The film has not shown anyone similar to the friar in the play, for the sake of hero worship. In the play, the feud is a background for the love story, whereas in the film the clash between the dominant families is foregrounded along with the love. Thus, the dominance of a class is established as “the powerful financiers may be said to have contributed to the perpetuation of a background capitalism in production and pre-capitalist ideologies in which relationships based on loyalty, servitude, the honour of Khandaan (clan) and institutionalized Hindu religious practices form the core cultural content.” (Prasad 49). In the film, ethnicity becomes a synonym for a culture produced by dominant class. An overall comment on the film *Ram Leela* can be interpreted in two ways. The film may be a satire on the present condition of an ethnic community or it may be misusing ethnicity for commercial purpose by forgetting its essence.

The intention of both the movies in adapting the Shakespearean plays to an ethnic culture was not the same. *Kaliyattam* as a film was an effort to widen the scope of the play by giving a new dimension, using the traditional culture of north Malabar. The film has shown justice in foregrounding the life of an ethnic community. The film *RamLeela*, adapted *Romeo and Juliet* innovatively. The purpose of innovation was to follow the conventions of Bollywood, not for expressing the identity of a particular ethnic community. The film did express the customs of a Gujarati community, but it was only for the glorification of a dominant class.

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The Racial Divide in Lorraine Hansberry's Plays :- An Epistemological Perspective

Meera Rachel Selvaraj

Postcolonialism attempts to investigate the cultural legacies of colonialism and their impact on native subalterns. Exploitation and subjugation were considered natural and legitimate by the white settler. Racism too was inherent in the structures of a colonial society. The racial and cultural superiority of the white man was often accepted and even welcomed by the colonized natives. Foremost among the devious methods used by the colonizer to convince the colonized about the superiority of colonial rule was the practice of representation. The ideology of representation is thus a major field of research in postcolonial studies.

In the past, representation was a simple matter of standing in for someone or for symbolizing something; but new research argues that representation is an epistemological process. It is “productive of what we know, and how we know it: that is to say, it is constitutive – it makes us” (Webb 5). Saussure’s views of language, Derrida’s concepts of difference and Foucault’s studies of power have given more impetus to the study of representation. Stuart Hall’s technique of using signifying practices provides us with an understanding of the manner in which the world of signs we live in can be interpreted and interrogated. This paper proposes to elucidate the idea that the use of representation to make meaning is basically epistemological. The writer taken for study is Lorraine Hansberry, an African American playwright who represents the power politics of racial encounters in her plays.

Centuries of prejudice had coloured the attitude of the white man towards the darker races even before he had literally met him. During the enlightenment

era, when the whites gained in power and knowledge, they tended to see Africa as primitive and monstrous. R. A. Dodgshon and R. A. Butlin in their book *An Historical Geography of England and Wales* (1978) have disclosed that the Enlightenment philosopher David Hume suspected that Blacks were “naturally inferior to the white” (528) and his opinion became prescriptive. The philosopher Kant conflated colour with intelligence as if it was self-evident. Hegel declared that the sun of history never seems to have passed over Africa and consequently it was steeped in savagery and ignorance. The prevailing discourse on race received scientific approval when western anthropology declared that Blacks were subhuman and belonged to an inferior race. Anthony Giddens and Simon Griffiths in their book *Sociology* (2006), asserted that Count Joseph Arthur de Gobineau (1816-82), who is sometimes called the father of modern racism, “proposed the existence of three races: White (*Caucasian*), Black (*Negroid*) and Yellow (*Mongoloid*)” (485). On this basis, peoples of the world were classified and categorised.

Classification and categorisation of human beings by sociologists and scientists presented the white man with the rationale to perceive the difference between the Self and the Other, between Us and Them. The Self was the norm and anyone who does not conform to the norm becomes the Other. Hansberry shows how the Other is ignorant, brutish and sub-human. In the play *The Drinking Gourd*, the Other is pitted against the norm. Hiram is the humane white master for whom all human beings are equal, but not so for the typical white man Dr. Bullett. To Hiram’s question whether Bullett is ready to go to heaven and meet his maker, the doctor replies:

BULLETT: I don’t think I’m so unready to meet my Maker, Hiram. I haven’t been the worst of men on this earth—

HIRAM: Macon—you own slaves.

BULLETT: Well, that’s not a sin. It was meant to be that way. That’s why He made men different colors. (*DG254*)

Visual difference – a biological characteristic – is highlighted here. As Hall argues:

The body itself and its differences were visible for all to see, and thus provided “the incontrovertible evidence” for a naturalisation of racial difference. The representation of “difference” through the body became the discursive site through which much of this “raavializedknowledge” was produced and circulated. (244)

‘Othering’ is thus used as a signifying practice to signify difference between the two races.

Once othering is embedded in the mind, it results in the discourse of binary opposition; the difference between Us and Them is seen in strictly oppositional terms. Hansberry provides us with examples of binary opposition like white and black, reason and emotion, culture and nature, mind and body which the white man used to reveal his superiority over the blacks. Hansberry’s first play *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959) is a consummate work of art which dramatizes the problem of segregation in American society even after slavery had been abolished. In this play, the final meeting between Walter Lee, the Black, underdog and Karl Lindner, the White capitalist, the binary opposition of reason versus emotion, mind versus body, are highlighted. Karl Lindner symbolises the White racist who has carefully analysed the situation. He makes it clear that the Other should stay in the margins and reminds them of “. . . some of the incidents which have happened in various parts of the city when colored people have moved into certain areas . . .” (116). His conclusion is topped with classic material offers: “Our association is prepared, through the collective effort of our people, to buy the house from you at a financial gain to your family” (118).

As opposed to this “white” man with the “rational, lucid” argument, the “black” man is “emotional”. To Walter Lee, pride in himself is more important than craving for money. With courage he looks Lindner directly in the eye and declares:

WALTER: And we have decided to move into our house because my father—my father—he earned it for us brick by brick. (*MAMA has her eyes closed and is rocking back and forth as though she were in church, with her head nodding the Amen yes*) We don't want to make no trouble for nobody or fight no causes, and we will try to be good neighbors. And that's all we got to say about that. (*He looks the man absolutely in the eyes*) We don't want your money. (132)

Racialized discourse is manifest throughout the play. *The Drinking Gourd* where the racist superstructure is clearly evident. The “well-laden” table in the Big House stands in direct opposition to the poor fare in the slave quarters. The language of Zeb, Macon Bullett and Everett in the play is neither rhythmic, poetic nor picturesque like that of Hannibal. It is plain and prosaic, whereas Hannibal's heart and soul speaks in his poetry. There is music, mystery and rhythm. Images of freedom enliven the language and imagination soars as Hannibal sits enraptured hearing his own words read out by Tommy:

I do not know why, but when a man lie on his back and see the stars, there is something that can happen to a man inside that be”—*Is, Hannibal—*”bigger than whatever a man is.” (TOMMY *frowns for the sense of the last*) “Something that makes every man feel like King Jesus on his milk-white horse racing through the world telling me to stand up in the glory which is called—freedom (295).

“Objectification” is “central to this process of oppositional difference” (qtd. in Collins 70). Domination objectifies subordinate people. The objectified Other is manipulated and controlled. Bell Hooks is of the opinion that “As objects one's reality is defined by others, one's relationship to those who are subject” (qtd. in Collins 71). Hall states that in most cases, as in the case of Destine in *Toussant*, “Her body was ‘read’, like a text, for the living evidence—the proof, the Truth—which it provided of her absolute ‘otherness’ and therefore , of an irreversible difference between the ‘races’” (265). In *Les Blancs*, Madame

Neilson tells Tshembe that when Eric was born to the white man George Rice and the native woman Aquah, it was known that Torvald all along felt that the child was evil and that the mother and child ought not to live. Hence, the famed doctor who is like a “father” to all, staunchly refuses to attend to her when she is about to deliver her child. Aquah dies in childbirth. Thus, through her African and African American plays, Hansberry presents the living denial of these people, their invisibility and how they were discriminated against by the Europeans as well as the Americans. Signifying practices of Othering and binary oppositions thus helped the Whites to justify racism and ensure the superiority of the Whites.

‘Stereotyping’ was yet another mechanism used for the purpose. *The Oxford Advanced Learner’s dictionary* defines stereotype as “a fixed idea or image that many people have of a particular type of person or thing, but which is often not true in reality” (oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com). This sort of “signifying practice” normally occurs when one group of people exercises inordinate power over another group. As Derrida comments, “in matters like Us/Them, one included and the other excluded, we are not dealing with peaceful coexistence . . . but rather with a violent hierarchy” (Wikipedia 25 Aug 2011).

Stereotyping is a representational practice that tends to essentially reduce and naturalise people. Bell Hooks explains in her book *Belonging: A Culture of Place* (2009):

Stereotypes, however inaccurate, are one form of representation. Like fictions, they are created to serve as substitutions, standing in for what is real. They are there not to tell it like it is but to invite and encourage pretence. They are a fantasy, a projection onto the Other that makes them less threatening (96).

Hansberry’s plays show how Blacks are ridiculed for their physical appearance. Alton is regarded with contempt by the White Mavis in *Sign in Sidney Brustein’s Window*. Hannibal’s face brings out the worst behaviour in Zeb Dudley and Everett Sweet: “(Hauling off and slapping him with all his strength. Zeb smiles a little to himself, watching) THIS! . . . Don’t stand there

and try to deceive me, you monkey-faced idiot! . . .” (DG 296). Other stereotypes include the mammy and the mulattoes.

The image of the matriarch is central to intersecting oppressions of class, gender and race. This is the aggressive, assertive woman who controls her man and exercises undisputed authority in her home. In fact “Black family structures are seen as being deviant because they challenge the patriarchal assumptions underpinning the traditional family ideal” (Collins 77). As *A Raisin in the Sun* opens, Mama is depicted as the undisputed female matriarch of the family. She emasculates the men of her household as she fails to be dependent or submissive. She is the matriarch who turns militant. The powerful matriarch image is a flawed gender relationship according to the racists.

The political superiority over the colonised led to other sorts of violence – mental abuse as in *A Raisin in the Sun* and physical violence like whipping, brutal beatings, lynching and rape in *Les Blancs*. In *Les Blancs*, Tshembe’s mother is raped and she eventually dies. In *The Drinking Gourd*, Hannibal is regularly beaten and whipped. He is ultimately blinded as he has learned to read and write. Like his contemporaries, Everett believes that slaves should remain in ignorance as learning to read and write would only empower them to rise up against their masters. He tells Hannibal: “. . . The ability to read in a slave is a disease—” (DG 297) and he decides to cut out the disease. Everett orders Zeb to put out Hannibal’s eyes. The narrator ends Act Two of the play with the “tortured screams of an agonized human being” (298).

The motivation of colonisation and slavery was greed for power and the desire to exploit both the land resources and human labour. The White men knew only to take from their slaves and from the land. In *The Drinking Gourd*, the men are ordered to work on the land for hours. In *Les Blancs*, minerals like silver, gold, diamonds, etc, are stolen by the Europeans. The natives are tortured. Tshembe reminds Charlie who argues about the need for dialogue rather than violence: “Where were you when we protested *without* violence and *against* violence? We did not hear from you then! Where were you when they were

chopping off the right hands of our young men by the hundreds—by the tribe” (120).

Stuart Hall cites Foucault’s *Discipline and Punishment* (1977), where Foucault talks about the operation of power through different forms of regime at particular historical periods (50). In the antebellum era, when surveillance and incarceration was the order of the day, the exercise of power was in the form of exhibiting the tortured body as a public spectacle. Hence, detailed descriptions of tongues being cut off, eyes being gouged out and similar threats were common punishments of the time. In *The Drinking Gourd*, the terrified Sarah, speaking of the people who help “runaways”, murmurs: “I heard Marster Sweet say once that they catches runaways and makes soap out of them” (237). Later, while Hannibal is being blinded, the audience witnesses the gruesome scene in which: “EVERETT turns on his heels away from the scene, and with a travelling shot, we follow his face, as he strides through the woods and as, presently, the tortured screams of an agonized human being surround him . . .” (298). Against the backdrop of the plantation grounds: “*The shadow of a man ingeniously strung by all four limbs between two saplings, each of which is bent to the ground away from the other. Two male shadows loom near and a voice says: ‘All right, guess we might as well cut him down now . . . gangrene must’ve set in’*” (279).

Patricia Hill Collins comments on how “Black mothers are encouraged to transmit to their own children the deferential behaviour that many are forced to exhibit in their mummified jobs. By teaching Black children their assigned place in White power structures, Black women who internalize the mammy image potentially become effective conduits for perpetuating racial oppression” (73). As *The Drinking Gourd* begins, Rissa, observing her headstrong and obstinate son, pleads: “What’s the matter with you, Hannibal? The one thing I allus planned on was that you and Isaiah would work in the Big House where you kin get decent food and nice things to wear and learn nice mannas like a real genamun . . .” (281).

However, unlike Hannibal, Murchison of *A Raisin in the Sun* and Abioseh of *Les Blancs* are hard-core assimilationists. Condemning their own people, culture and past; they scathingly indict their own heritage. As Fanon observes, their “black soul is a white man’s artifact. The educated Negro, slave of the spontaneous and cosmic Negro myth, feels at a given stage that his race no longer understands him. Or that he no longer understands it” (*Black Skin, White Masks* (16)).

Racism and its evils are the major concern in most of Hansberry’s writings. Hansberry was able to see race both as a specific cruelty towards the Blacks and as a part of larger phenomena of humanity’s capacity for evil and viciousness in the world. Tshembe in *Les Blancs* denounces Race and Racism as a device. He tells Charlie: It is “simply a means. An invention to justify the rule of some men over others” (*LB* 121). He also comments on the evil that is rampant on a universal scale which is generated by race.

I am simply saying that a device *is* a device, but that it also has consequences: once invented it takes on a life, a reality of its own. So, in one century, men invoke the device of religion to cloak their conquests. In another, race. Now, in both cases you and I may recognize the fraudulence of the device, but the fact remains that a man who has a sword run through him because he refuses to become a Moslem or a Christian—or who is shot in Zatembe or Mississippi because he is black—is suffering the utter *reality* of the device. (*LB* 122)

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Postcolonial studies thus help in understanding how colonial systems of knowledge and the epistemological framework of the time justified exploitation of the Other. Though rampant at a particular point in history, racism has not become history. Making huge claims and presumptions about people based on their identities from the perspective of White supremacy is a process that continues to feed people. Today all nations claim to cherish freedom and justice but the pathological failure to tackle racism threatens to destroy the moral fabric of many nations.

In our age of political correctness, colonialism exists in new ways and forms. Free trade agreements, treaties, immigration policies exploit the East and benefit the West. Cultural colonialism is facilitated by technological development and by the global circulation of Hollywood movies. For instance youngsters and adults alike are fascinated by Disney's family-oriented entertainment. Their products have been distributed and recognised in many Third World countries since the 1930s. They also introduce their own children to Disney products as if they are all important parts of a happy child that parents want for their children. This is just to give one example of how western commodities have infiltrated the east and how they continue to influence eastern thinking. The old and the young, adults and children are open to their manipulation. Colonial masters once exploited and benefited from the work of the slaves and today the intellectual resources of the third world are made use of to increase profits of the first world corporations. The legacy of colonialism still goes on.

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The Cosmopolitan being in Search of Identity: A Postcolonial Reading of Anita Nair's *Malabar Mind*.

Sruthi V. S.

“We have to pay a price for who we are” (83). In this world of confusion and identity- crisis one has to pay a price for being true to the self. All are trying to create “a splendid new face” which is powerful to exfoliate the speckles of the past. Anita Nair, the well-known novelist from Kerala, has achieved the status of a poet with the publication of *Malabar Mind* in 2010. She blends the culture, myths and history of Malabar with the present political and social contexts. These poems reveal her attachment to Malabar and its culture. She contrasts the harsh realities of life with the bright imageries she has brought into her poems. The collection has forty poems, but only few selected poems are analysed here.

“Mostly A Man, Sometimes a God” is a poem about Parassinikkadavu Muthappan. Parassinikkadavu is a part of Malabar’s cultural heritage. Poet is trying to draw a line between the two aspects of Muthappan; as a God and as a man of flesh and blood. Even when transformed into a God, he drinks deep of the “forbidden mortal desire” for women. But the moment his “anklets shiver,” the man in him retreats and he becomes the “protector.” Soon after he has received the offerings, the Divine self is satisfied and leaves the body. He happily “wipes away the guise of divinity” and seeks the “eyes and skin” of women, with the reminder: “I am a man; / Only sometimes a god” (4). The man within is eager to be back to his true self.

Like the random thoughts of a lunatic person, the poetess has presented the scattered images about the history, culture as well as the contemporary

scenario of Malabar in the poem “Malabar Mind.” The “triangular hate” of “the cow worshippers, the pig haters / And the sunshine-haired cow eaters” (21) was witnessed by the river Nila. She reminds that even the soft breeze of Malabar carries the blood stench of wagon tragedy. The foolishness of Zamorin “opened doors to colonial greed” and “Our men now sail the seas / Across the bay to the desert Hope” (22) as an aftermath of the greed. Children listen to the recorded voice of their father who is abroad while the desires of his wife are satiated by some “distant cousin.” This shows how colonialism could break the family life even in this independent era. Past and present are yoked together in the poem. Anita Nair depicts how “politics has become a way of life” and identity creation. She asks: “How man can be content / When he knows his rights?” (24) Activists are born out of the demand of political situations.

The lost values and the meaninglessness of urban life are given a feminist treatment in the poem “Why Women Dream.” The shameful experience of “being treated like a fair piece of flesh” while searching for a face with “beady eyes” is well portrayed. Sometimes but a woman is more privileged than a man, and she says:

Privilege and pain
come together.
Love and aching
are the Gemini twins. (32)

The woman who wishes to “live in poppy fields” and to fall asleep in that red field is confined to a small space of a flat where open windows have become “peep holes,” and she is forced to dream. The woman when wanted to save a stray puppy, was restrained by her beloved who has a reasonable but “marble heart.” She wants to escape from this mechanical life and the guilt consciousness associated with it, to be like the squirrels that “live as they should” (33). So the woman is trying to find solace in her dreams.

In the poem “Free Fall” the poet explicitly expresses her “nerve-end longings” as a woman; “I like my body to be loved / touched, stroked and

desired” (35). “I Want” is another poem which is a frank expression of a woman’s desires, though at a different level and tone:

I want your eyes to seek mine
I want to hear the hushed lust in your
voice amidst the noise . . .
I want your fingers to unerringly seek mine
I want to exist as more than a mere habit. (37)

A strong woman with a free will who demands love and care is portrayed here in these poems.

The poet brings in the theme of relationships and the lost intimacy between people in many of her poems. Every relationship becomes a mere arrangement where the partners can leave at any moment with a cold face accompanied by dead words. Lover can be degraded to the status of a friend at any stage of the relationship on mutual agreement, and they can walk out with dignity. Even the nuptial love is questioned in “The Lullaby” when she says “A kind of a whore, I trade my body / So that at night, I don’t have to dream alone” (57). The futility of man-woman bond is crystal clear when the woman says that she will leave the man to the solace of hiding his “head between two pillows” (70) if he loses the battle, in “An Ostrich’s Love Song.” The poet is also well-aware of the unreal nature of love when she says “We knew / When in love / Even gutters have green banks” (14). She depicts how love is replaced by lust in the modern times.

The poem “Vulcan in Brindavan” points out how we accept our own culture when it is accepted by a foreigner. Everything originally belonged to our culture gains double value when it is accepted and promoted by a foreigner. This attitude explains how we still consider the people who once oppressed us as superior, and ourselves inferior. She explains how we “discovered” Kathakali:

We discovered Kathakali
Seated cross-legged at Paul’s side

Paul wrapped our heritage with foreign awe

And gifted it back to us. (9)

Though Paul knows more than us about our history and culture, we will not allow him to criticize it as we are not ready to accept any criticism from a foreigner.

“The Cosmopolitan Crow” unravels the life saga of a crow who has travelled to faraway places and at last has returned to the security of his homeland. The narrator is the crow himself who says it is not an epic story to be told in heroic verses, but rather a history that must be dealt with the “blankness of rhyme” and “plainness of words.” He asks the readers to look within while listening to his life. He is a postcolonial crow who wanted to conquer heights and explore new worlds. The poem has four parts which deal with the crow’s childhood, youth, life in the foreign soil and his return to homeland.

The title “The Cosmopolitan Crow” symbolises the surviving capacity of crow which accounts for its ubiquitous nature. The term “cosmopolitan” means a plant or animal found all over the world, surviving even in the extreme situations. The adjective “cosmopolitan” suggests a well-travelled, sophisticated, worldly being who can live at ease in different cultures under changing circumstances. The speaker in the poem is a crow who has just returned from America to his homeland.

The crow was born to a single mother who made nest with twigs, straw and barbed wire. In lonely nights she brooded on “the sins of her passion,” watching airplanes moving like “streaks of lightning,” and adding salt to the raindrops washed on her. She brought him up feeding his greed and fighting enemies all alone, without letting him know the harsh realities of life. “He was still a crow child who cried mama,” nestling to the warmth of her chest and hiding from the vast blue sky that scared him. Like any other crow child who belonged to a cosmopolitan city, he too was a small child who knew nothing,

but the baby boutiques and folding prams. Baby boutiques and folding prams symbolise the extent of globalization in an underdeveloped or third world nation.

Birds always lead a free life. Crow mother told her son that it is time for them to depart as he is grown up now. "I have my own life / and a man to find," told his mother. As a farewell note solely for him, she said:

(The only way to live
is not to fly too high.
Keep away from live wires
and don't love too hard.
And remember,
don't trust another crow...) (100).

These lines are given in parenthesis to show the covert nature of the crow mother's advice which is meant (solely) for the survival of her son. She wants him to "survive" in a world full of slingshots even if he can lead only a mediocre life. These lines reveal the competition one has to face in a new world where hundred others are waiting to see his failure.

The crow who is now free of all bonds and commitments thinks melancholically that he is not a man yet. For him manliness is acquired not only with the hormone activities within, but with the loss of innocence too. He grows up in a world where foreign culture is thought to be superior to native culture. So he, along with a Nutcracker, travels to the land where crows are called "ravens." He wants to find the "US of A". He thinks why there is no mention of crows, but only ravens. "Didn't the Brothers Grimm know of us?" (101) This points to the silencing of "the voice of others" in mainstream literature. Western ideologies were glorified and perpetuated through literature. As fairytales are meant for children all over the world, sublimity of western culture is nurtured within them in their childhood itself. The crow continues to ask "[No fairy tale has a squirrel./ Why not?]" (102) Squirrels are named as

chipmunks in America. The question is highlighted by placing it in a parenthesis to show the inner currents contained in it.

Frantz Fanon's theory of Deculturization and Acculturation is relevant here. Attracted to the foreign culture, the crow "flies high" abroad with the Nutcracker from his native culture where crows are treated as transmigrated souls of human ancestors; where crows are excited easily seeing scrap, or by snatching snacks from children. With contempt he watched the routine life followed by his community. By trying to imitate the foreign culture they deculturized themselves. This cultural alienation praised as assimilation results in an inferiority complex. The crow sees this in "the lost look" in the eyes of the "crows-turned ravens." The aftermath of this "cultural shock" is the identity crisis faced by these migrated crows who tried to transform themselves into ravens. This deculturization is followed by the attempt to rediscover native culture or acculturation. Crows abroad go to Ganesha temple wearing traditional dresses and bindi. They are seeking their lost identity by cultivating the native culture, but realize that they cannot have it in piece-meal. For them this rediscovery of culture is a defence mechanism to face the identity crisis and alienation.

The crow does not feel that he belongs to this foreign land and he is very lonely. To his loneliness comes a little raven who follows a different value system. She doesn't understand love or the long bond of marriage. Crow says: "we were only living together. / We shared pleasure, not pain." She could not understand the traditions and customs followed in the culture where the crow originally belonged to. The crow returns to his homeland realizing that he cannot "feel one with" the foreign culture.

Among ravens of America, crows and crow-turned ravens receive a subaltern position. They speak in the borrowed language with "an American twang." They are cultural and psychological refugees who have to depend on the alien culture for survival. Young crow-ravens are brought up on Aunt Jemima's waffles, Micro-waved key lime pie and broccoli, following American menu. Even Nutcracker could settle well with the chipmunks. At this point of

loneliness and alienation in the cultural void, the crow flied back to the “theosophical island” of the big tree, under the shades of which soldiers and seers rested alike.

The crow got high reputation as he has travelled far and has lived with ravens. When he said that life is same for both crow and raven in all parts of the world and basically there is no difference between both, others heard it as if he is telling them a story. Life remained the same here. Still his mother was single and fighting her battles all alone. The crow had a double consciousness where he wanted to be back to his roots and was perplexed about leaving the little raven behind who fed his senses when he was abroad. His dreams were haunted by the thoughts about her. His own conscience asked him in the voice of the Nutcracker where has he lost his “killer instinct.” It was easier for the crow now to “look beyond” than to “look within.” For him “remembering was another way of sinning” as he has decided to stick to his decision. According to Dr. Carl Jung, raven represents the shadow self or the dark side of the psyche. In short, Crow is the symbol of human psyche and intuition and cosmopolitan crow is the new nation man who is searching for his own self and the culture he owned once.

In *Malabar Mind* there are seasons of waiting, personified emotions like sleep hanging itself and lust looking into eyes and leaves later. It paints word pictures where we see a glass lamp that spills its yolk of light like an egg in an old house which along with the lonely woman in it, is waiting for a family to replace the collective unconscious with alive moments and noise. In this age of Globalization, Third World man has “sold his soul to the cannibal world of advertising” (12). This cultural commodification is the trade mark of postcolonial third world where everyone hides his face under the mask of a new, hybrid culture. Yes! It is true that, to be true to the self, everyone has to pay a price in this present world of anxieties and chaos. Her poems, like pieces of a shattered mirror which tries to reflect a whole world, opens up a fragmented world to the reader in its entirety.

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Tracing Dalit Consciousness in Bama's Autobiographical Work *Karukku*

Sneha R Pillai

It has been said that the root- word dal in dalit has been borrowed into Sanskrit from Hebrew. Dal may be used in two senses: it may refer either to physical weakness and feeble mindedness or to lowly insignificant positions in society. According to the Hindu Varna system Dalit means oppressed or formally considered as untouchables. The Sanskrit root dal- means “broken, ground-down, downtrodden, or oppressed.” Those previously known as Untouchables, Depressed Classes, and Harijans are today increasingly adopting the term “Dalit” as a name for themselves. “Dalit” refers to one’s caste rather than class; it applies to members of those menial castes which have born the stigma of “untouchability” because of the extreme impurity and pollution connected with their traditional occupation. Dalits are ‘outcastes’ falling outside the traditional four-fold caste system consisting of the hereditary Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra classes; they are considered impure and polluted and are therefore, physically and socially excluded and isolated from the rest of the society. This system of untouchability has been prevalent for over 3000 years and continues to exploit the downtrodden, exploited, deprived and oppressed. The most appropriate definition of Dalit in its contemporary usage comes from a letter written by Gangadhar Pantawane, a professor of Marathi at Milind college and founder editor of *Asmitadarsh* (mirror of identity), the origin of Dalit literature:

Dalit is not a caste. He is a man exploited by the social and conomic traditions of his country. He does not believe in God, rebirth, soul, holy books teaching separatism, fate and heaven because they made him a slave. He does

believe in humanism. Dalit is a symbol of change and revolution.(Paswan 2002) And even if a small section of them have become well- to – do with government patronage, in an economic or professional sense, socially they are still downgraded and unacceptable. Dalits’ effort to rise up in the social scale are too often brutally crushed by the upper- castes, who resort to mob- raids, murder, arson and rape of the dalits, especially in the countryside, to keep them in their age- old subservient positions.

Bama is the most celebrated Tamil Dalit woman writer who is also a dalit activist. Hailed as the first Dalit woman writer in India, Bama’s *Karukku* is the first autobiography of its kind in Tamil Dalit literature, published in 1992 and it was translated into English by Lakshmi Holmstrom and won the Crossword award in 2001. Her major works, other than *Karukku* include two novels and three short story collections. *Sangati*(1994) and *Vanmam*(2002) are her novels. Her short story collection includes *Kisumbukkaran*(1996), *Oru Tattvum Erumaiyum* (2003) and *Kondattam*(2009).

Karukku, the first Dalit Tamil autobiography by Bama portrays the plight of dalit how they are physically and mentally tortured by the society even if they are respectable personalities in the society. Throughout her narrative Bama vociferously condemns all forms of oppression: be it caste, class, or gender. At the end of the narrative she fervently tells her fellow- citizens to erase caste, class and religious differences and to develop a humane society. This caste consciousness is a false consciousness shaped by Vedic and Puranic myths, as serving the interest of the dominant caste and classes.

Dalits do not have their own history; they are marginalized as object in a country rather than being treated as its subjects. Here modern writers like Bama, is tracing the history of Dalits and the dalit consciousness of the whole society. Also Dalit writing can be seen as a protest against written history which always excluded them, whether it was colonial, nationalist or Marxist historiography. The light of letters was denied to them so that they cannot record the history themselves. As Poikayil Kumara Gurudevan writes, “I see no alphabet about my race I see the histories of many races there was no one in

the past to record the story of my race!” (Tharu:29)

Dalit consciousness is the expression of democratic awakening of lower caste. Dalit consciousness frequently appears in the discussion of dalit politics and identity. It refers to the notion of political awareness, that is consciousness rising among certain sections of the dalit population and other refers to the collective notion of identity in a diverse Dalit communities.

Through her autobiographical work Bama traces the dalit consciousness, how dalits are treated in the society. She explains it through several stages of her life. Bama happens to come from a Tamil Dalit community called Parayas, who are, even to this day, considered to be the lowest of the low in the Indian caste system and in order to get rid of this social status attached to them, her family got converted to Christianity. But religious conversions in India have hardly bought any remarkable change to the lives of the untouchables because even after conversion they are looked down upon by the upper-caste. Bama does not mention any of the Dalit leaders well known in other parts of India such as Phule and Ambedkar.

Caste is a societal consciousness. As Ambedkar states, Caste is a notion; it is a state of the mind, which prevents us from having a “consciousness of kind”. By “consciousness of kind” Ambedkar was invoking the phrase coined by American Sociologist Franklin Gidding, who defines it as, a state of consciousness in which any being, whether low or high in the scale of life, recognises another conscious being as like kind itself.

Bama expresses her grief over the pathetic and helpless condition of Dalits: “They never received a payment that was appropriate to their labour.” (47) As Bama says: “Many say that Dalits are supposed to live like this and that. Dalits are impure people. They are drunkards. They have no culture. Any interaction with them will defile the body and soul. Every Dalit individual of this society has to pass through this very false consciousness of the society. Especially in Tamilnadu, Church has a major role in the identity building of the Dalits. Through her autobiographical work she demolishes that no religion can build an identity of their own, Christians also follow the same caste system

of Hinduism, resulting in the caste hierarchy, caste subordination and exploitation. *Karukku*, among other things, depicts the caste practices of a Christian priest who shows preconceived notions about Dalit Christians: “The priest’s first response was to say, “After all, you are from the Cheri. You might have done it. You must have done it.”(19) The Parayas who converted to Christianity in order to escape from the caste oppression in Hinduism were greatly shocked to experience the oppression within the church. Further, reservations benefits were not granted to Dalit Christians as theoretically, Christianity does not recognize caste. The government’s reservation policies fail to take into account the gap between the belief and practice and Dalit Christians face the brunt of it. Bama, personally, was against the reservation system. She says, “Reservation actually dehumanizes us rather than solving our problems. It aggravates our situation. We are objects of contempt in public places. People say, he or she doesn’t have any talent or merit.”

Bama speaks about the importance of the education, how it can make a change in the society and how it changes the false deep- rooted consciousness of the people in the society. She has proved it through her own life experience giving a multi-dimensional view to the readers. At each and every stage she had experienced oppression - as a child, a student, a nun and as a woman. But as a bright student in the school, she was able to avoid much struggles and oppression more than any of other dalit students.

Karukku is not about Bama’s life experience as a whole; it upholds the various problems which are responsible for the sufferings of the Dalit’s. According to the traditional caste system of India, Dalits are situated in the lower strata of the society as they were marginalized in social, economic, religious and political spheres of the society. Dalits and their consciousness are deprecated from the society. As she says in the autobiography:

. . . because dalits have been enslaved for generation upon generation, and been told again and again of their degradation, they have come to believe that they are degraded, lacking honour and self- worth, untouchable; they have reached a stage where

they themselves, voluntarily, hold themselves apart. This is worst injustice. This is what even little babies are told, how they are instructed. The consequence of all this is that there is no way for dalits to find freedom or redemption.(29)

Bama here points out the societal consciousness of the society. How society treats the marginalized or the untouchables. Everyone born to this society is a part of it, they cannot be discriminated on the basis of race, caste or gender. As Buddha who had taught

Not by birth does one become an outcaste.

Not by birth does one become a Brahmana.

By deeds one becomes an outcaste.

By deeds one becomes a Brahmana.(Paswan 2003: 281)

Christian dalits too have to suffer insults and indignities and stigma of untouchability, the same as all dalits. Against the wishes of her family she joined the convent. Like all other parents they wanted her to get married. But her wish was to work among the lower caste people. In every sphere of life she had experienced marginalization. At the younger age she thought that as a nun she could make changes in the society or fight against the discrimination towards the dalits. But the situation was quite different when she experienced herself as a nun. Bama was shocked to find out that all the sweepers, attendants and lower rung officials in the Church were Dalit Christians and the higher officials who controlled them were from the upper-caste. Bama had joined the convent so that she would help the poor and the downtrodden children. But after staying there for some time she came to understand that the place was also no better than the earlier one where the nuns themselves were practicing caste discrimination.

Bama finds that where ever she goes, there is a painful reminder of her caste in the form of untouchability. On another occasion, in her college which was at a distance from the village, Harijan students were asked to stand up to get enrolled for special tuitions as part of government project for Scheduled

Caste students she sadly realized that caste bias is everywhere. The Naicker families in her village never approved the dalits even if they are well educated. She states many incidents Both Bama and her elder brother had to face this prejudice in spite of being educated. Her elder brother was in the village for holidays. He was then a university student. He used to visit a library regularly to borrow books during the holidays. On one such day a Naicker man asked who he was and the very refined reply seemed to infuriate the upper caste man only because he happened to talk to a Dalit man. Once when Bama, was travelling home for holidays, a Naicker woman was sitting beside her in the bus. The woman rose up and moved to another seat when Bama on being asked a query, replied that she lived in the cheri street. Cheri street is where the Paraya community has their settlement in the village. The woman was afraid of being polluted by an untouchable. Bama was appreciated in the assembly for being topper in SSLC exam. She herself proved that a harijan can make progress even if his or her life situation is worse. And can become the focus of the society. Dalits are born to work, hard and it is the part and parcel of their daily life. It is heart rending to see small children below 10 years of age setting out for work at early in the morning.

Life as a Paraya is hard to live from the very childhood. Everyone has to work in Naickers house or the field in order to earn money. Apart from this, they work as construction labourer by digging wells, carrying loads of earth, gravel and stone and even if this work is not available they go to the hilltop to gather firewood. Each Paraya family is attached to a Naicker family as bonded labour. There are Nadar men who have shops in the Paraiyar streets. Paraiyars would exchange the goods, which are brought to them and in return Nadars used to give what the Paraiyars needed. The Paraiyars are badly cheated during their bartering session. They exchange the harvest grain, cotton pods. Every time Nadaras take the advantage. But the Dalits are the ones who toil hard to make good.

Bama uses colloquial language to expresses the dalit consciousness that is prevalent in her society. Only through that discourse she can truly convey

her emotions. With the portrayal of the cultural and social life of Dalits, Bama takes the Dalit identity to glorious heights and thus celebrates the Dalit life and its culture. Along with this she deliberately raises her voice against the oppression faced by the Dalits. The Dalit world finds their voice proclaimed, in Bama.

In *Karukku*, Bama emerged and established herself as a powerful voice of the subaltern woman. Thus in *Karukku*, it is the “subaltern who speaks”. Bama successfully pictures the cultural, social and familial life of Dalits. It does not confine itself to the oppression and the harsh realities faced by the Dalits. It elaborately describes the daily life, language, naming conventions, religion, culture, festivals, food habits, entertainment, games, teasing songs and kinship in the Paraya community.

Dalit literary writing is a mode of activism that seeks to free Dalit’s from the clutches of dominant ideology and casteist oppression. The consciousness of a community can be seen in the self reflected work of Bama. By producing dalit consciousness she aims at the liberation of Dalits. Bama emphasizes that Dalit should break the norms of the society and fight against the oppression. The caste- consciousness in Bama is so strong, so through her writings she stands against the traditional caste system. In *Karukku* Bama presents the plight of dalits, how their identity is constructed by the upper caste people of the society and how their psyche is consciously structured. *Karukku* means a palmyra leaf with seared edges. It is used to thatch the roofs of Paraya huts. The seared edges of the leaf hurt one who handles it. The pain experienced then is negligible compared to the wounds inflicted by the society. The *karukku* leaf continues to hurt those handling it, at the same time energizes them to face the odds. Bama moves a step ahead in her life by creating *Karukku* in the hope that the silence of the Dalits will articulate itself and herald a world of respect and pride.

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The Psychology of Viewership: A Study of the Presence of the Past in the films, *1983* and *Premam*.

Nayomi Rajan

“I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought” (Shakespeare 3)

Film is a laboratory of never ending experimentation with varied themes and techniques to suit the taste of the demanding spectator. The film maker consciously tailors a film to propitiate the spectator. There are several elements which keep the spectator fixed on to the screen while watching a film. Cinema becomes a mediator for the spectator’s unconscious desire and hence, watching a movie is a kind of wish fulfilment for the spectator. There is a constant communication between the objects on screen and the unconscious of the spectator. Psychoanalytic film theory has been an effective tool in the hands of theoreticians like Christian Metz, Jean Louis Baudry and Laura Mulvey to unmask the psychic mechanisms functioning in the unconscious of filmmakers, characters, spectators and in the specific instances of cinematic discourse.

The Malayalam film industry has recently seen the emergence of a new generation of film makers who have revitalised the industry by their unusual themes and innovative methods of story telling. Though many of these films have been criticised as bordered on erotic overtones, some have been extremely successful in wooing the spectator. Although these films do not come anywhere near the artistic finesse displayed by the earlier classics, they have set the box office ringing.

This paper analyses two recent Malayalam films *1983* and *Premam* that have been set in the backdrop of the last two decades of the twentieth century. These films bring back a much cherished past before the eyes of the

spectator. The objects on screen carry the cultural and social experience of a not so remote past yet remote due to the absence of them in the present. Interestingly they have been directed by personalities who grew up in the same period. This study investigates the psychology of spectatorship, the spectator's 'passion for perceiving' the past on screen and how the objects symbolising the past act as fetishes and restore their lack in the present. The psychoanalytic and semiotic approaches of Christian Metz and to some extent that of Laura Mulvey in the study of filmic discourse form the basis of this paper.

Abrid Shine's *1983* is narrated through Ramesan (Nivin Pauly), a village youth who is fascinated by cricket, the new found passion of the 1980s after India became World Champions in 1983. Ramesan who is an above average student gradually fails to perform in academics as he is preoccupied by cricket and spends his time playing with a group of friends equally passionate about the game. As his studies or cricket do not take him anywhere he ends up as a mechanic in his father's lathe. He marries a naive girl named Susheela (Srinda Ashab) who has little knowledge of cricket or Tendulkar. They have a son, who from an early age exhibits skill in cricket. Ramesan sends his son to a professional coach and takes pride in watching him grow as a star player. The whole story is set in a period which is marked by several objects, images and events that are characteristic of the bygone era.

Premam by Alphonse Puthren follows the three phases of the love experience of the protagonist, George (Nivin Pauly) in three different stages of his life. The first phase is his teenage infatuation with a school mate, Mary (Anupama Parameswaran). The second and the most genuine is his love for a young teacher, Malar (Sai Pallavi) in his college, which surprisingly gets reciprocated but not fulfilled. The third is his proposal to Celine, (Eva Prakash) the sister of Mary as he matures in love and life. The film, especially the first phase brings the graceful objects of past to the spectator's mind. Both these films take the spectator on a visual tour of sights and sound which are already present, but lie hidden in the unconscious of the spectator.

Spectatorship is not only the act of watching a film, but also the ways one takes pleasure in the experience, or not; the means by which watching movies becomes a passion, or a leisure-time activity like any other. Spectatorship refers to how film-going and the consumption of movies and their myths are symbolic activities, culturally significant events. (Mayne 1)

The film institution as a whole has filmic pleasure as its aim. “The cinema satisfies a primordial wish for pleasurable looking...” (Mulvey 60) There are always certain structures that go into the constitution and pleasure of the cinematic spectator. One means of pleasure can be the scope of identification that films provide the spectator. Christian Metz in his work, *The Imaginary Signifier*, treats this initial identification with the screen image as a resuscitation of the earlier experience of the mirror. In the cinema there is always something on the screen but the reflection of the spectator’s own body disappears. Metz explains: “Thus what *makes possible* the spectator’s absence from the screen or rather the intelligible unfolding of the film despite that absence – is the fact that the spectator has already known the experience of the mirror (of the true mirror), and is thus able to constitute a world of objects without having first to recognize himself within it.” (46)

The permanent play of identification becomes a necessity for the intelligible unfolding of the film without which the film would become more incomprehensible than the most incomprehensible film. The films, *1983* and *Premam* present before the spectator a plenitude of objects which are indispensably linked with the shared world of experience of the past. *1983* starts off through the eyes of Ramesan, who rewinds his past to the year 1983 when India lifted the Cricket World Cup. A ten year old Ramesan sits with anxious eyes in front of a Sony television along with his peers, equally anxious, watching the final match of the World Cup. This very scene prepares the spectator to set out on a journey of revisiting the past which lies buried in his unconscious. Though the film showcases a cricket savvy generation, there is much above cricket which makes it appealing to a larger audience. Set in a

visually appealing village, the rustic terrain with its beautiful back waters, unpaved pathways all shake the spectator's consciousness leading to identification with his own rural past. Images small and big follow one after the other as Ramesan matures in age. The ink pen, with its companion, the ink pot, the blue gum bottle, the primordial antenna which had to be turned around and adjusted manually for fine tuning, the wickets made of stick and the cricket bat made from coconut leaf stalk –all pass in front of the eyes of the spectator. Televisions which were a rare sight during those days brought a crowd of audience to the houses which had them. The only channel, the Doordarshan with its iconic symbol and the battling of distinctly powerful arrows striking each other in the well celebrated serialisation of the epic, *Ramayana* are revisited by the spectator. As the plot progresses, the present comes closer to the spectator and the objects representing the past slowly vanish from the screen.

Premam's flight takes off in the fluttering wings of colourful butterflies which hover all around the plot mystically and symbolically. Right from the first shot of a dark mossy wall, which is familiar to every hamlet, the film takes the spectator on a ride into the familiar objects of a forgotten past. The protagonist, George is a child of the 1980s and enters his adulthood in the early '90s. Again the fountain pen, letter writing, the STD/ ISD telephone booths which were attached to every local teashops, the ice sticks which were sold by cyclists, the old model telephone and a comparatively modern corded telephone with parallel connection, which were characteristic of the period flash before the spectator's eyes. Although they belong to a recent past which is just two decades back, many of these objects are out of sight of the modern man. Some of these objects represent the infancy of the communication technology which have vanished from the routine of the Malayali, here the spectator, due to explosive advancements in technology.

At the cinema, it is always the other who is on the screen; as for me [as a spectator], I am there to look at him. I take no part in the perceived, on the contrary, I am *all-perceiving*. All-perceiving as one says all-powerful (...) absent from the screen, but certainly present in the

auditorium, a great eye and ear without which the perceived would have no one to perceive it.” (Metz 48)

Metz states that the spectator, even if not present on the screen, is all powerful. The spectator participates in the pleasures of the text, and plays a crucial role in determining the meaning of a film. He holds a position of power and makes sense of the images and sounds on screen. The spectator is not simply a passive viewer, but interacts in the action of the film, taking the pleasure of watching and giving a meaning to the film. He decodes the film and gives meaning to the film which relies on signs and images.

The spectator who is absent from the screen cannot directly procure the objects on screen. But he attains it by identifying with the characters that represent “the more perfect, more complete, more powerful ideal ego conceived in the original moment of recognition in front of the mirror. The character in the story can make things happen and control events better than the subject/spectator, just as the image in the mirror was more in control of motor-coordination.” (Mulvey 63)

Thus through the star hero and the other characters on screen the spectator has a closer contact with the “lost objects” and “accomplishes” his wishes which are otherwise unattainable. Metz observes that every film effectively engages the processes of condensation and displacement and this is why they can accomplish desire hallucinatingly. The spectator who is “the live, breathing, actual audience member, coming from a specific socio-historical context” (Aaron 1) can thus identify with the objects on screen coming from the same context without himself present on the screen. These objects which once constituted his past are absent from his present and the spectator must perceive the presence of this absence as signifying. Thus cinema makes present (signifies) what is absent (the Imaginary) - that is, it shows a recording of what is absent. This play on absence/presence means that we are confronted with the imaginary completeness of the absent image of the child in the mirror. “However it is not fantasy, a “purely” symbolic-imaginary site, for the absence of the object and the codes of that absence are really produced in it by the

physis of an equipment: the cinema is a body (a corpus of the semiologist), a fetish that can be loved.” (Metz 57)

According to Metz the desire to see (scopic drive) and the desire to hear (invocatory drive), are the two perceptual passions that drive the spectator to watch a film. These two drives are dependent on a lack and it is this lack that the desire wishes to fulfill. The objects on screen are not real but substitutes, and the desire of the spectator “pursues an imaginary object (a “lost object”) which is its truest object, an object that has been lost and is always desired as such.” (59)

Fetishism in Freudian terms originates in the child’s horror of female castration. Confronted with the mother’s lack of a penis, the fetishist disavows this lack and finds an inanimate object (the fetish) as a symbolic substitute for the mother’s missing penis. Lacan elaborates on the distinction between the fetish object and the phobic object; where the fetish is a symbolic substitute for the mother’s missing phallus, the phobic object is an imaginary substitute for symbolic castration. Laura Mulvey talks about the two avenues that the male consciousness has, to escape from this castration anxiety. One is preoccupation with the re-enactment of the original trauma: or else “complete disavowal of castration by the substitution of a fetish object or turning the represented figure itself into a fetish so that it becomes reassuring rather than dangerous.” (64) The second avenue is fetishistic scopophilia which transforms the object into something satisfying in itself. Baudry adopted a more Freudian approach, which focussed on cinema’s ability to embody psychic desire.

Keeping all these various approaches to fetishism in our minds, let us go back to the films under discussion and to the spectator who comes to watch these movies. The spectator who represents a particular socio-cultural and historical context, here the 1980s, confronts a lack of several objects which were part and parcel of his past. When he watches these movies, he becomes conscious of the cultural castration that he has undergone unawares whereby he had to let go of the objects of the past which were once part of his life. An example is a scene in which a man is involved in the task of turning and adjusting

the old modelled antenna fixed on to the roof of the house of an NRI. He turns the antenna slowly, simultaneously asking the children standing below, “Is it clear now?” This is followed by the scene where the children sit in the drawing room along with the elderly lady of that house watching the programmes in Doordarshan, the only channel of those times. The camera focuses on the iconic symbol of Doordarshan which appears on screen, followed by visuals of other popular programmes with a commentary of a nostalgic Ramesan in the background. All these scenes which lie buried in the unconscious of the spectator are brought to his consciousness.

Ramesan and his school friends play cricket in the open space of the school with a bat made of coconut leaf stalk. This scene acts as a replica of the spectator’s past and he at once recognises the neatly carved out bat which made cricket possible in his childhood. All these catch the attention of the spectator as his childhood is inextricably linked with them. They are valuable possessions of his past which have now vanished from his sight. He has been dispossessed, but he is able to disavow the lack by finding a fetish in the ‘imaginary’ object on the screen. Thus the fear of castration of the past is disavowed by fetishising the object on screen to replace the lack.

Again in *Premam*, the Hero pen, the Chelpark inkbottle and many such objects which were the essentials of school days once upon a time, are shown in a close up shot. When George calls Shambu (Shabareesh Varma) on his land line, his father attends the phone. In this scene, the speaker is out of the screen and the focus is on the old modelled heavy black phone with a round dial which was once part of every household. These objects on screen act as fetishes of a bygone past thus providing pleasure to the spectator.

To conclude, the involvement of a spectator is crucial for a film, his “activity or passivity, manipulation or resistance, distance or implication” (Aaron 1), as without him there is no perceived. It is he who gives meaning to the film. The modern film makers who are well aware of this ensure that their film projects images one after the other which keeps the spectator glued on to the screen. As the film industry is a moneymaking enterprise, the film maker

learns more about the tastes, likes, and dislikes of individual film spectators thus ensuring the profitability of its investment. “All losses are restor’d . . .” (Shakespeare 14)

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The War of the Sexes: Dimensions of Rape and Adultery in Anita Nair's *Mistress*

C.V. Abraham

*Anita Nair's novel **Mistress**, an evocative tale of art, love, sex, and betrayal, follows the structure of Kathakali, a well-known performing art form of Kerala. The metaphoric use of the art of Kathakali is vital to the storyline. The narrative opens with a prologue and ends with an epilogue, and in between, the main body is segmented into three books, each having three sections, thus making up nine sections in all. Each section bears the name of one of the navarasas as explained in Bharata's *Natyasastra*, starting with 'sringaaram,' and culminating in 'shaantam.' The navarasas dictate the mood of each section where the character's stream of consciousness is revealed to the readers. Set in a ninety-year time frame, this novel presents two parallel plots: one involving the trio—Radha, her husband Shyam, and her lover Chris—and the other centred on Radha's uncle, Koman. This study focuses only the first plot because the second one does not fall within the ambience of this paper.*

More than marital incompatibility or the question of conjugal purity, it is the power struggle between husband and wife—man and woman—that is really foregrounded in the novel. The tension in the narrative begins with the arrival of a third person, Chris (Christopher Stewart, an American travel writer), to the lives of Shyam and Radha, husband and wife. Radha and Shyam are not bound by the philosophy of interdependence in terms of rights and obligations vis-à-vis the other. Instead, each of them attempts to exercise power upon the other, and this game of power eventually results in dissonances. Shyam-Radha power struggle is worst manifested in the form of open sexual violence in the

case of Shyam, and in the form of tacit adulterous transgression in the case of Radha. These aspects of the power struggle require a closer analysis.

First let us look at the sexual violence Shyam inflicts upon Radha, his wife. “The right of men to control the female body is a cornerstone of patriarchy,” observes Carole J. Sheffield (409). Even a slight resistance to this ‘right’ of man may be met with ideological aggression, physical violence, threat of rape or even rape. Sheffield adds: “Under patriarchy men are entitled to sex; it is a primary vehicle by which they establish and signal their masculinity” (421). Susan Brownmiller, who attempted a detailed study on rape, writes: “The myth of the heroic rapist . . . is inculcated in young boys from the time they first become aware that being a male means access to certain mysterious rights and privileges, including the right to buy a woman’s body” (324). Diana Russel’s study on rape reveals that married women are more likely to be raped by their husbands than strangers (67). Shyam, a true representative of patriarchy, believes that he has every right on his wife’s body, and to sexually serve the husband is a wife’s duty, no matter if she is willing or not. Though Radha says that she is in no mood for sex, Shyam does not let her go: “You are my wife,” he reminds her, and asserts, “I have my rights” (Nair 163). “Don’t I have a right to say no?” asks Radha (163), but Shyam is in no mood to listen to her, because he belongs to the league of men who believe that sex is the husband’s right and the wife’s obligation. So he exerts force and Radha cannot but yield to his will.

In Sheffield’s words, “Violence against women is power exercised sexually. It is violence eroticized” (421). Neeru Tandon also shares the same view: “Rape is not just violent sex; it is a display of power . . .” (61). She continues: “Rape as a form of personal violence is not merely a physical assault It is in fact a conscious process of intimidation by which men keep all women in a state of fear” (63). Shyam exhibits not only the strength of his power but also the depth of his hatred for his wife. Radha knows that resistance may not yield any result, and therefore, she lies down like a lump of wood, and that makes Shyam all the more furious. His violent hands fall upon her body

even though he feels that she is rigid. “She lay there like a wooden block, immune to my caresses. I was past caring. I kneed [sic] her legs apart and tore her panties away. She was dry and arid. I felt anger cloud my mind again. I spat into my hand and smeared her with my spit” (Nair 163). Sheffield calls such aggressions ‘sexual terrorism’ (410). The violent Shyam who rapes Radha is no better than a sexual terrorist. All his fury, sense of revenge, desire for dominance, and urge to exercise power take a violent turn: “Then I fucked her. The resentment I felt for being tolerated rather than loved, the yearning I had suffered, the loneliness of these eight years, all fused to become a consuming desire to possess her. To reach within and tear down that film of indifference . . .” (Nair 163). The text thus clearly suggests that Shyam’s infliction of violence upon his wife has more to do with his deep-rooted sense of masculine power than with any desire for erotic gratification. It is significant that the author has titled the chapter in which the rape scene appears as ‘Raudram.’ Raudram wears the countenance of anger, wrath, and fury, and it is a precursor of violence.

Since sexual power gets equated with masculinity, the victim of sexual violence is subsequently treated as less powerful. That is why even a male victim of rape is looked at as more feminine, and therefore, weaker. Fred Pelka, a male victim of rape, recounts how, after the incident of rape, he was abused by the (male) police, ridiculed by his (male) friends, and marginalized by the (male dominated) society (428). Pelka believes that he was accorded such a hostile response because he was a male victim of rape, and his masculinity was put under question. He goes on: “Had I been an accused criminal, even a rapist, chances are I would have been treated with more respect, because I would have been seen as more of a man. . . . Being a rape survivor means I no longer fit our nature’s neat but spacious definition of masculinity, as one empowered, one always in control” (428). Shyam’s reflections on his violent act of trespassing his wife’s private and intimate space are indicative of how patriarchy constructs sexual violence. Havelock Ellis, who studied the psyche of the male lover inflicting pain upon his lady, observes that the lover feels, more or less obscurely, that the pain he inflicts is really part of his love, and

that it is not really resented by the woman on whom it is exercised (17). True to this observation, Shyam too believes that woman really enjoys violent sex: “When I woke up, she [Radha] was at my side, all bright and chirpy. And suddenly it occurred to me that that was what she had really wanted: a good fuck. It shames me to think it, but I realize it is the truth. Women like to be made feel like women, dominated and put in their place” (Nair 164).

The analysis of this act of sexual violence will remain incomplete unless one examine the victim’s reflections as well. We read the thoughts of Radha: “I felt sore and bruised, invaded and *robbed*. Is this rape, I asked myself again and again” (Nair 165; emphasis added). Here more than the word ‘rape,’ the word ‘robbed’ is foregrounded, with the result that the whole act is rendered more as a property-crime than a violent criminal act on a woman’s bodily integrity. Such a reading becomes more plausible when we come to learn the original meaning of the term ‘rape.’ “Rape was originally synonymous with theft: to rape a woman was to *rob* her father or husband of her value by rendering her unchaste . . .” (Cameron 12; emphasis added). Strangely enough, Radha was at first unsure if it was rape or not (she looks up the dictionary to get the meaning of the word ‘rape’), but further reflections on the event make things clear to her: “There are no categories of rape. Rape is rape, even when sanctified by marriage. And the rapist doesn’t have to be a stranger, emerging from the shadows. He could be your husband” (Nair 164-65).

Now let us look at the other side of Radha-Shyam power struggle—Radha’s sexual transgression. Radha, the central female character, is positioned in this novel in two ways—as a wife and a mistress, the first being the norm and the second, deviation. The clash between these two positions produces tensions and contradictions, and competing viewpoints come into contact with each other. These resistant thoughts throw Radha into the centre of the narrative web, and she is forced to take a stance ratifying one position at the expense of the other. Evidently, Radha’s alliance with the outsider—Chris— also means an intense urge for sex. She knows well that she ought to show restraint in her relationship with Chris, but she can’t do it because “He is a fire in my blood”

(Nair 207). She realizes that her real love is worth Chris, but she does not dare leave her husband to start a new life. Instead, she plays the roles of both a wife and a mistress, willingly and wilfully. It all means that Radha's adulterous alliance with Chris should be read not only as the manifestation of her strong sexual impulses but also as her way of resisting her husband's dominance over her. At the very outset of the novel it is made clear that Radha has no love lost for her husband. "He wasn't just a sham, he was an uncouth boor, this husband of mine" (9)—this is how Radha introduces her husband to us. Her dislike for him has nothing physical about it because he is really good-looking. "He looks like a popular Malayalam film star. I, however, feel nothing for him except perhaps a habitual annoyance" (13). She feels that her husband never treated her as a wife or a woman: "I think that for Shyam, I am a possession. . . . That is my role in his life. He doesn't want an equal; what he wants is a mistress" (53). And she openly tells him: "I am your wife. . . . But you treat me as if I am a kept woman. A bloody mistress to fulfil your sexual needs . . ." (53).

Though Radha uses adultery as a strong weapon in her power struggle against her husband, she gives up the fight halfway. As days go by, she begins to feel remorse over her deceit and soon resistance gives way to repentance. After each sexual encounter with Chris, Radha feels a deep sense of guilt, and she blames herself: "I feel disgust for what I am doing. Can anything be worth this repugnance?" (Nair 290) If we closely analyze Radha's self-accusatory statements, we cannot fail to notice the attempt she makes to create a kind of false comparison between Shyam's crime (rape) and her crime (adultery). Radha is convinced that 'rape is rape,' yet she is not prepared to blame her husband with all her heart, because she is filled with remorse over her own crime, adultery. While discussing the sexist nature of language Kate Clark analyzes the *Sun* headline, "HUBBY KICKS NO-SEX WIFE OUT OF BED" (cap. in orig.) and comments: "There is a tension between 'no-sex' and 'wife.' Rather like 'lady-doctor' or 'male-nurse,' the use of 'no-sex' implies a deviation from the norm. The implication is that a normal wife would have sex with her husband" (192). The rape episode in *Mistress* also presents a similar context.

Since the wife says ‘no’ to sex and thus fails in her ‘duty,’ her husband rapes her. Researchers Bachar and Koss tell us: “After a rape, many survivors experience intense feelings of guilt, shame, and self-blame, in part because they have internalized victim-blaming myths and believe that something they did or didn’t do led to their rape” (897). Here Radha’s reflections endorse this observation. Examine her words pitying her husband: “This morning, though, I feel sad. For him. For us. For our marriage. He deserves better” (Nair 61); and also her words of self-accusation: “Everything that I think he has put me through is outweighed by what I have turned him into. A broken man, hurt and humiliated, and I know that it is I who have caused him such anguish” (397). We can reread this text as follows: (i) I had sex with an outsider while I denied sex to my husband; (ii) so, my husband raped me; (iii) therefore, my crime (adultery) is more serious than his crime (rape). The two terms—‘rape’ and ‘adultery’—effect a kind of ideological tension in the narrative with the result that the real issue—man exercising his power upon woman—gets obscured. Radha’s self-accusatory statements trivialize the gravity of her husband’s crime, and even absolve him of it, thus indirectly sanctioning legitimacy to it just because it took place within wedlock. In other words, Radha ratifies, wittingly or otherwise, the gendered ideology that endorses a man’s right over his wife’s body.

Man in our society is confronted with a large number of possibilities, and is capable of exercising power, and such power and possibilities in turn determine his character. But woman in a patriarchal set-up does not enjoy such possibilities, and hence her essence is not a natural emanation of her existence. Radha, who is posited in the novel *Mistress* as if pitted against her husband and her lover simultaneously, is assertive and resistant to a certain extent, but is unable to go on with her resistance and win the game. Her final decision to be free of men by leaving both her husband and her lover tells us that she has surrendered to her enemy in the war of the sexes. Such a withdrawal from the battlefield is characteristic of many an Indian woman who are caught between the compulsions of cultural ethos and convictions of their minds. They ardently

desire for freedom but are unable to resist a powerful system. Anita Nair's message is clear: women must build their own lives because nobody else would do it for them.

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The Portrait of Female Characters in Shashi Deshpande's *That Long Silence*

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Indian writing in English has gained global prominence. There are many writers in India who are using English language as a medium for their creative expression. This trend has heralded a new era in fiction and has taken to new heights. The genre of fiction is a reflection of human life, society, its experience, beliefs and aspirations. In fiction writing, the Indian women writers have made rapid strides in terms of achievement. Their works exactly mirror the contemporary world where the helpless women undergo all sort of sorrows in a patriarchal world. Shashi Deshpande is a household name in Indian writing in English. She ensured through her novels that the readers get sensitized to the burning issues in the society. Her novels are written with Indian background and it has proved to be her specialty. Her characters, settings and conflicts faced are absolutely Indian. She has proved to be an excellent story teller.

That Long Silence is an internationally acclaimed novel. The novel presents an intriguing picture of an ordinary Indian women. The novel has a female protagonist named Jaya. She lives with her husband Mohan and her children Rahul and Rati. The novel dwells deep into the family life of Jaya. She is shown as an affectionate mother and a dutiful wife. In a patriarchal society, the feelings of women are not given any importance. Jaya is no exception. All through the novel, Jaya is trying to find out her own identity as an individual.

The novel is all about Jaya and Mohan. They are life partners who lead a happy married life in spite of their differences on some fundamental issues. Both are from a middle class back ground. Jaya's parents were liberal in their

attitude and they named her Jaya so that there is victory even in her name. They expected her to grow as a bold and courageous woman. Though her father was liberal in his attitude, yet he suppressed some of Jaya 's interests. For example, she loved film music whereas her father appreciated only classical music. This difference in taste was not appreciated by her father. It was a blow to Jaya's self identity and it hastened her to keep her emotions and feelings to herself. After marriage, Jaya finds no encouragement from her spouse. She sacrifices all her interest at the expense of married life in a male dominated society. She has no other alternative, but to conform with the rules and regulations of the society. She is not sure whether she lives for herself or for her family. She is taken for granted by all family members. Nobody understands her inner feelings and emotions. Although, Mohan and Jaya have a closed relationship, Jaya is unable to establish an intimate relationship with her husband in the emotional sense. Her silence symbolizes how women all over the world are unable to express their inner feelings. She, quite often, introspects and reminisces and they have become a routine part in her life. She tries her hand in writing and she finds no domestic encouragement. She is neither appreciated by her husband nor by her children. Having grown up, her children have no time for her. She leads an unsatisfying life, yet she has no courage to revolt against it.

In the early days of their married life, Mohan served in a steel plant at Lohanagar. He is dissatisfied with his work as it did not pay him well. He started doing unfair things to earn more money. He left the house one fine morning without even informing his wife and did not come back for several days. Jaya's husband Mohan misunderstands her on many occasions. One of her stories was widely acclaimed and it won prize. The story is about a husband who had only physical intimacy with his wife. This work infuriates Mohan as he feels that it has exposed their private life. To stop aggravating her husband's feelings any further, Jaya gives up writing. However, she continues writing under a pen name.

Time is a great healer. After some time, Jaya receives a telegram from her husband that he would return soon. Now Jaya is confronted with a question as to whether life would continue to be like as it was earlier. This time, she is able to muster courage and decides to change her old patterned life and be in equal terms with her husband. . The author closes the novel with an optimistic note.

In the novel , Shashi Deshpande brings out a new Indian woman and her dilemmas. She very vividly portrays the plight of modern Indian women who are making efforts to establish themselves as wives, mothers and human beings. The novel makes a scathing attack of Indian social institutions such as marriage and family. The author has her own way of presenting situations and characters in the novel. She is firmly of the opinion that women become victims of male chauvinism and their own defeatism.

In the novel, the first harsh lesson on the necessity of liberating herself comes when she loses temper and sees the reaction on her husband's face. She feels that: He had looked at me as if my emotions had made me ugly, as if I'd got bloated into them. Later, when I knew him better, I realized that to him anger made me 'unwomanly (83)

Since then, she has been longing for his approval, she had moulded her behavior to look more womanly. " It was when I first visited his home that I had discovered how sharply defined a woman's role was. They had been a revelation to me, the woman in his family, so definite about their roles, so well-trained in their duties, so skillful in the right areas, so indifferent to everything else. I had never seen so clear, so precise a pattern before, and I had been entranced by it."

She had reluctantly yielded to his dismissal of movie advertisements, never trying to confess that she enjoyed them in case he thought ill of her taste. She had faithfully followed all beauty tips in women's magazines and had mercilessly chopped off her long, lovely hair because he wanted it cut "like Mehra's wife". But as Rani Dharker comments: "these things don't really

matter. What is much worse is that her inner landscape gets corroded”. (Dharker 105)

Jaya’s power of self-determination is severely corroded by this interior patriarchal role-of expectations. She had obeyed all her husband’s decision, to leave her job and come to Bombay, to be a refugee in an unpleasant family flat: “always he had assumed I would accompany him, had taken for granted my acquiescence in his plans”. She had bartered her self-respect as a writer for his approval, had sacrificed her talents as a serious writer and narrowed herself to the weekly “Seeta’s column” which had measured up to Mohan’s idea of what was socially permissible writing for a wife. The security of marriage, a security which could be shaken an attempt at self-assertion, had led Jaya to a painful decision: “I relinquished them instead, all those stories that had been taking shape in me because I had been scared-scared of hurting Mohan, scared of jeopardizing the only career I had, my marriage”.

Shashi Deshpande explains the position of woman in a patriarchal society – someone without a clear sense of purpose and without a firm sense of her own identity. For the protagonists Saru, Jaya and Indu, a journey into the past, a return to their childhood homes is the necessary spark that sets them off on the path of re-definition and self-discovery. They realize that through a re-appraisal of the past, they could arrive at an understanding of the present and a pattern for the future. A sudden domestic crisis makes Jaya and Mohan seek refuge in the shabby family flat. Temporarily liberated from the unending monotony of the housework, referred to by Simone de Beauvoir as the “torture of Sisyphus”, Jaya capitalizes fully on this rare chance of introspection and searching self-analysis to relocate her life on different plane. It is as if the return to the root triggers off the whole complex process. Sarala Palkar comments:

“Caught in an emotional eddy, Jaya endeavours to come to terms with her protean roles, while trying, albeit in vain, to rediscover her true self, which is but an ephemera – an unfulfilled wife, a disappointed mother and a failed writer”. (Palkar 134)

Jaya enjoys the advantage of a supportive father, one who is not merely cosseted her as Maya's father had done, but had inculcated in her a positive belief in herself, calling her Jaya, for Victory. As a child, Jaya had felt free to voice her opinion vociferously; as her Ajji complained, she had "for everything a question, for everything a retort". The same lively spirit had often exhibited itself through tantrums during her adolescent years. Then what had changed her to a submissive housewife? Jaya herself is puzzled by the transformation.

In retrospect, it was perhaps the death of her father, the man who had always reiterated: "You are not like others, Jaya". (136) His support has been taken away, the concerned Impact of granted mothers, aunts, cousins could no longer be ignored. Detached from her moorings, isolated in a college hostel in an unfamiliar town, she realized that she "did not want to be different from others". She had let herself slide into prescribed behavioural patterns, remoulded herself by suppressing the vocal, angry, questioning self so lovingly nurtured by her father.

It is the view of Shashi Deshpande that women generally bear the tyranny of men silently in Indian middle class families and if any of them come to suffer from some ailment, they are callously neglected and left to die unsung. Jaya is an example of the woman who has no choice but to submit, to be led by their husbands like Sita and Draupadi of yesteryears to the forests and jungles, and in to the mire of infamy, and deserted finally. After all she is yoked with her husband inextricably. The novelist had used a very apt metaphor of being yoked like bullocks to convey the idea that marriage is irrevocable and wife is bound by a covenant to follow her husband. She has to blindfold herself like Gandhari if the husband is blind, no matter if she has to suffer the loss of her hundred sons in consequence thereof. Jaya was married to Mohan who, like the modern young men, was blinded by his desire to become a millionaire over-night. He had a good job of a junior Engineer in a steel plant at Lohanagar.

A boy of a poor family, whose school fees was paid by a philanthropist, ought to have thanked the society and his stars on becoming an engineer, but he instead dreamt to be married to a girl who could speak English fluently and

to become rich over-night. Naturally, such a boy was to resort to unfair means as he did. He resigned his job and found another at Bombay. How he got the new job was no to be concern a his wife. She was to be a Gandhari, and follow her husband to Bombay. Mohan started making money. He could send his children to good public schools, and travel first class. He had to okay substandard goods to make a fast buck. As a natural consequence, he was found involved in a scam. He had to fly from church gate to Dadar to escape ignominy and ire of the minister. Poor Jaya who has yoked with him had also to go to Dadar with him without a whimper.

But this flight in fear revealed Jaya's esthetic sense which she had voluntarily suppressed. She was not interested in collecting gadgets and curios for her house, but Mohan, being materialistic in contrast with his ascetic wife, had made a collection of those things. Jaya had to spend sometimes in cleaning and arranging them. But at Dadar, she was free from this job for which she had no liking. She recalled: "And yet I had a sense of freedom. There was nothing to be cleaned, nothing to be arranged or rearranged, put back in its place, tidied. I was free after years, of all those monsters that had ruled my life, gadgets that had to be kept in order, the glassware that had to sparkle and dust free, and those clothes, God, all those never ending piles of clothes that had to be washed and ironed, so that they could be worn and washed and ironed again..." "Thinking of those two rows of mahogany elephants we have in our living room at home in Churchgate was like remembering a vanquished enemy, how much time I had spent dusting and polishing them, how punctilious I had been about it....".

Ascetic as she was, she felt that all these things did not allow her to live her life unclogged. She felt it was monstrous to spend life on those things, yet she was doing all that because she was yoked with Mohan, without freedom to go her way.

Like all other women, Jaya had perhaps no right to take her own decisions. She had to wait for one or the other person to chalk out her course of life. She was exhorted to "wait till you get married. Wait until your husband comes; wait until you go to your in-laws home. Wait until you have kids"

She was in a way, to wait and bear and do nothing on her own. Her Vanitamami had advised her not to revolt even if the husband had a few mistresses. Perhaps she was also similarly advised. It was too much to expect of a life. And since they had the feeling of insecurity deeply embedded in them, Vanitamami gave her the advice that the husband was like a sheltering tree which should be watered and manured in all circumstances.

These pieces of advice are uttered directly, without the circumstantial requirement, because they are uttered directly by the women who had drawn wisdom from centuries of experiences. Jaya's Ajit (grandmother) had advised Jaya in her turn to keep quiet before her husband to make him comfortable – "I am sorry for your husband, Jaya, whoever he is. Look at you - for everything a question, for everything a retort. What husband can be comfortable with that?"

She naturally meant that Jaya should not argue; put her views, mainly when they were contrary to her husband's or unpleasant to him. Poor Jaya followed this advice of Ajit's in letter and spirit, yet she was not happy. She recalled, "I had neither any question nor any retorts for Mohan now, and yet there was no comfort..So many subjects were barred that silence seemed heavy with uneasiness".

When Ravi said that he knew about Mohan's present problems, Mohan lost his calm. He accused Jaya of callous indifference, selfishness, negligence of wifely duties, and lack of feelings for him, saying that she couldn't have any feeling for him when she and her brother didn't have any for her mother. He further said unabashedly, "as long as I had my job and position, it was all right, as long as I could give you all the comforts, it was all right. But now, because I am likely to lose it all... it's not just you, it's all women", as if Jaya was not his wife but a woman with him only for her comforts. He went to the extent, like Hamlet, of saying that all women were frail in character. Jaya had lot to say in defence, but couldn't retort, she couldn't answer back to him because she felt, "my body went rigid, I could feel a chill along my upper arms, my forehead, as the sweat broke out".

It was not Jaya's case alone. Kusum's was worse. She was a mother of three children, but since she had gone insane, she was ostracized. It was only Jaya's Vanitamami who gave her shelter in spite of opposition of her husband, Jaya's Chandumama. Kusum was asked to run away whenever Chandu mama came to the house. Kusum had strong mother instinct but her children didn't need her. Jaya kept her in Dadar flat because she would be away from everybody in the family. When Kusum desired to go to her children, she was sent to her brother's house and from there she was sent to her in-law's house, where she drowned herself in a well. Jaya's mother wrote to her to inform her about Kusum's death, "Kusum had gone, to her in-laws for a few days, and the day before her husband was to take her back home, she threw herself into a well and died. Your aunt keeps moaning and crying, but it was a good thing in a way." She was hurt by her mother's remark: 'she was of no use to anyone? It was the tragedy of Kusum that : 'she was born to these feckless, hopeless parents who never worked a day in his life; a mother whose world centered round her youngest, the baby on her lap, while the rest of her kids ran around in wild abandon, unkempt, dirty, unfed..... What chance Kusum had his parents like that'. Kusum was, in fact, ostracized to death. Jaya had seen, "That plunge into the well was there in her eyes the day she tagged along behind us as we went for a movie, she, Dada and I. It was there the day she peered at us out of Vanitamami's dark room, clad in rags, while the only decent clothes she had were getting dry". (28)

Jaya's dada advised Jaya to ignore Kusum who would suffer isolation to that degree. Nayana, the sweeper woman, was pregnant again. She was already a mother of two girls, and her two sons died after birth. She had lost her second son, recently. Her breasts were still oozing milk. She hoped that this time she would get a boy. Jaya asked her why she was craving for a male child. Nayana had once cursed men-her husband, her brothers, her father, - as 'wasters, good-for-nothings, and drunkards'. But she was helpless. Her husband had told her plainly that he would throw her out if she gave birth to another daughter. Though Nayana had also dared him to do that, saying, "let me see

your courage. Take yourself another woman if you want, roll in gutters. I can't prevent you, but you try to throw me out of this house", (28)

Nayana had to pawn her anklets with the Marwari for the treatment of her eldest daughter. Her husband didn't give her anything, as she described her plight; she made a sweeping remark about the pitiable state of girls in the society. Since she got nothing for herself in life, she thought it better to have a son. She said, "Why give birth to a girl, behnji, who will only suffer because of men all her life? Look at me" (28)

Mohan's mother had to pass her days in abject poverty and humiliation. She used to go to help in cooking whenever there was a function in any house. She had standing instructions of her husband that she should cook rice for him separately since he would not eat remnants of 'children's disgusting eating'. He wanted his rice, fresh and hot, from a vessel that was untouched. One day she had just finished the second cooking and was waiting for her husband.

When he sat down to eat, he lost his temper since his favourite chutney was not there. Without knowing the reason for the lapse, he threw the brass plate at the wall and walked out. She cleaned the wall of the splattered food and asked her daughter to get some chilies from the neighbor to grind chutney for her furious husband. The girl went hesitatingly, since she knew it was odd to go to a neighbor in the night to ask for chillies. The husband didn't realize that his was a house of scarcity and the obedient wife was hamstrung by her destitution.

The information given by Vimala in confidence to Jaya presents a picture of a miserable woman. She told her that her mother was making bakeries and Vimala was preparing to go to school. Before that she was helping mother in the kitchen. All of a sudden the thump of her hands as she beat out the bakeries came to a stop. Then she heard her mother's screams. She rushed to the kitchen and saw that her mother was beating her face with her flour stained hands. With great difficulty she could stop her hands, laid her down near fire. She was crying 'I can't, I can't'. when she stopped crying, she began breathing heavily and a week later she died. Vimala recalled that she had seen her mother

pregnant all her childhood. Thus, her mother lived and died in very adverse and difficult circumstances.

Vimala herself didn't have a better deal. In spite of her view that she was different from her mother, there was something common between them. As her mother died unheard and unsung, she also died unheard and unattended. When Jaya and Mohan went on their annual trip to Saptagiri, they went to visit Vimala also. There they learnt from Vimala's mother-in-law that Vimala had been in bed since over a month, yet she didn't know what her ailment was. She asked Mohan to take her away, if he wished, as she had no mind to take her to a doctor. Vimala's mother-in-law said plainly. "Yes take her away if you want to. I never heard of women going to hospitals and doctors for such a thing. As if other women didn't have heavy periods" (39)

Mohan and Jaya took her to the hospital where the doctor was rather surprised to know that Vimala hadn't told of her illness to anybody while she had been suffering so much. He diagnosed that she had an ovarian tumour with metastasis in the lungs and that it was too late for surgery. When Vimala died, people whispered that she died due to bleeding. Mohan mumbled while mourning over Vimala's death, "why didn't she tell us? Why didn't she write to me?" but Vimala gave no answer to the question. Her answer would have been, if she had ventured to make, that she had learnt from her mother's example that nobody would hear a woman. Her mother was also not taken to the doctor.

In *That Long Silence*, Tara is a self-supporting woman. Jeeja and Tara belonged to the lowest stratum of the society. They lived in a chawl doing all kinds of odd jobs that came their way. Jeeja was a childless widow. Her husband had taken to drinking and married again because Jeeja didn't have any child. Jeeja was so simple that she didn't have any complaint against the woman either. Naturally she accepted it as a fate. After some time the other wife of her husband also died of T.B., leaving to bring up her two children. Her son Rajarama married Tara. Rajarama was a drunkard and beat up his wife. Tara had two babies in three years of her married life. She had begun going with Jeeja to several houses, because her drunkard husband was good for nothing

to provide for the family. He extorted money from his wife. His daughter, Manda, reported : “Baba beats up Ai (mother) because she had no money to give him, and if she gives him any money, Ajji scolds her”.

That is the hell that women have to live in. Tara’s eldest Daughter, Manda had to work to earn livelihood. She worked from morning till evening. She would go to school in the morning, collect money for the milk in the afternoon, delivered the milk, stand in queue for rations, for kerosene, helped Jeeja on holidays in scrubbing utensils. Jeeja had started Tara on the business of selling batatawadas. Jeeja would go to Byculla market once a week to buy the potatoes, the onions, the Garlic and chilies. Manda used to bring kerosene, and peel potatoes with the help of her two brothers and run about to serve the customers. But the strike in the mill put an end to their business. The workers didn’t have money to buy her batatawadas. The novelist was touched with pity for the underdog. Jaya recollected that she had read that baby girls were done to death a century or so back. They were buried alive, crushed to death in the room they were born in, and fire was lit in the room to purify the place. She could not forget, the agony of the girl babies for days on end, but the plight of the girls in the present day society, she thought, was not less agonizing. She, therefore, thought, “But now I wondered whether it wasn’t more merciful, that swift ending of the agony once and for all, than this prolonging of it for years and years”. (53)

She bemoaned that society did not understand the value of the domestics even though it was more than clear that life would become difficult rather impossible without the services they rendered. Jaya felt, “It was Jeeja and her like I needed; it was these women who saved me from the hell of drudgery. Any little freedom I had depended on them”. Jeeja, Tara and Manda worked all the twenty-four hours for their livelihood, partly because their men were drunkards, reluctant to do any work.

One night Mohan and Jaya heard whispers coming though the window. She thought that a couple cowering into the darkness were talking something private. But it soon became clear that the man was belabouring the woman in

the street to know from her where she had gone that day. Jaya heard the sound of blows and kicks dealt to the woman again and again. The woman cried: 'mother, mother, mother', but none came to her rescue. One man asked them not to make noise as it was disturbing him in his sleep. Mohan felt like strangling the man. This was the treatment meted out to a woman in the street. Mohan realized, "It's not fair. It's easy for those men to go out in the streets, to threaten, to become violent". The case of Asha, Ravi's wife, shows how husbands become cruel to their wives, leaving no option to them but to go away to their parents. As Jaya knew, Asha was not just 'one of those persons one could call good-there was neither malice nor meanness in her'. On the contrary, Ravi 'lived by drifting on the edge of dishonesty'. Jaya had felt sorry, and indignant on her behalf when she was that Asha, when she had come home as newly wedded bride, decked in skills and jewels was surrounded by women. Jaya felt, "Only her innate good nature had enabled Asha to stand all that rubbish". (111)

So in the opinion of Jaya, Asha was a girl, having innate good nature, free from malice and meanness, yet she was fated to be persecuted by a dishonest, irresponsible, and liar husband. Ravi was still in the aggressive mood as he asked Jaya to tell his wife Asha, that he wouldn't stand interference of her father: "I am not going to put up his big bully tactics". He threatened that he would 'chuck her'.

Women undergo a cultural degradation everywhere . Shashi Deshpande is of the opinion that any marriage is better than being a spinster for a woman. Womanhood is looked down with utmost contempt. Men consider them to be blank pages for them to own and write indiscriminately. The woman becomes ashamed of her own body and starts hating herself for no fault of herself. This negative mind set makes a serious dent in her self-image. All these aspects are very well touched upon by Shashi Deshpande through her female characters.

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The Visual Rhetoric of 'New Media' - Communicating Gender and Sexuality at a Glance

Linda P Joseph

Spectacles tell stories. They have the most appreciable ability to communicate thoughts, ideas and attitudes. When brought to the lime light, they can trigger the critically inclined minds to question and unearth the connotations and denotations. Nothing is assumed to be free of an ideology, free of power plays. Such is the simple psychology of our world, the community we reside in, the beliefs we embrace. And so the spectacles of this postmodern era that has advanced and still seeks to advance in all possible realms of knowledge through technological assistance within the reach of our hands can become the narratives of our time. The world of the present day is open to broader expanse of socio- cultural, economic and intellectual landscapes. It is a world where little or no secrets exist, a world dominated by spectacles perpetuated through the highly powerful diverse media forms like television, news, films, popular music, magazines and advertisements. The media cultures promoted through these forms have made an impactful saturation into our daily lives. They have invaded our mindscape with images that speaks for certain systems of representation, certain ideologies and dominant powers.

In reality each individual is integrated into specific socio- cultural economic structures that define and position him or her with relation to a social order based on biased attitudes towards certain gender, race, or ethnicity. Thus individuals who assume to be free of all systems of representations could be understood as living an unconscious or even pretentious lie. It is an obvious and undebatable fact that the media culture plays a pertinent role in subjecting the populace to specific conceptions regarding all the 'labels' that inform their person. All media forms surface as powerful tools that can both impact and inturn, get impacted by the culture of the community they cater to. It is infact

the need of hour to take a critical- interpretive stance to study the visual rhetoric of the media that has launched an era of sophistication, change and even radicalism.

A mirror that reflects a culture, the eye that beholds the world, the mastermind that can shape our perceptions - none of these labels fail to encompass the power of media in today's world. Media is omnipresence. They have the potency to impact and shape the societal structures and operations, to create and endorse diverse notions and norms, especially with regard to gender and gender roles, through the usage of convincing and striking visuals and narratives. They generate a cultural attitude and knowledge that is relational to the already existing systems of representation. They could legitimize the dominant forms of power structures and ideologies that are part of the socio - political frame of a period or could even resist and subvert the very same.

The visual rhetoric employed by media is pervasive. They have the potency to change the world we reside in, for good or worse. A study of the politics that underlines these compelling visuals and polished narratives of 'new media', as one could preferably call the rapid changing and evolving phases of the present media culture, can uncover both the appealing and unappealing facets of it. All forms of media cater to certain interests and a targeted audience who are inturn socially, politically and culturally positioned into different layers of a hierarchical order. My paper, *The Visual Rhetoric of New Media - Communicating Gender and Sexuality at a Glance*, attempts to uncover how media participates in an essentially gendered world and what stance they take and propagate in terms of gender and sexuality by examining the general trend in depictions of a few mostly viewed visual texts that specifically belongs to the advertising genre.

Gender is a highly problematic and politically significant term that has been subjected to rigorous deliberations and debates over the past decades. The study of what constitutes the inherent meaning of gender must have principally come from the standpoints taken up by all those writers, critics and thinkers who voiced the women's right. It was their attempt to elaborate on the differences between gender and sex, the former being more of a performance,

generated, reinforced and naturalized through repeated acts in an essentially patriarchal society and the latter being a biological construct. Gender is 'performative' as Judith Butler, the eminent gender theorist acknowledges in her seminal work, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Even in this postmodern era which prides on all the radical and progressive propagations that have been made for promoting egalitarian societies around the world, questions of gender discrimination and exploitation of sexuality still remain an entanglement. Though the past decades have witnessed a change coming over all biased attitudes that favoured one gender, race or even ethnicity over the other, the current scenario where deliberations on the very same hold true, would conclude that these preferences are still promoted in one way or other.

Every community, every nation and every individual endorse certain practices, beliefs and norms which are compatible with the culture that identifies them. No culture is static; each culture evolves through time, accommodates change and tries to preserve a characteristic legacy. Each culture thus owns an identity that forms an integral part of the lifestyle and attitude taken up by all those who belong to that culture. The most ardent propagator of a particular culture often turns out to be none other than media, for media can 'communicate'. And of all the diverse forms of media, it is the genre of advertising that is acknowledged as most tactful in directing and moulding our common perceptions.

In an essentially consumer society, advertising in its literal sense aim to inform, persuade and sell a product to potential customers which they do by employing a convincing ideal cultural language code that is equally shared by the latter. They have a powerful say with regard to gender, gender roles and sexuality. There have been many prominent studies and researches conducted in various nooks of the world, principally in the European countries, that were directed towards unearthing the gender stance propagated through the advertisements. These analysis centered around the selection and reading of prominent, most rated and most preferred of ads mostly of the 1960s and 70s, coming down to the 21th century, along the gender lines and the findings

generated a rather, more expected outcome that revealed the gender discriminations underlying the depictions. The early studies conducted by European researchers like Courtney and Lockeretz (1971), and Wagner and Banos (1973), to name a few, into the topic of gender position in ads and that of Williamson (1975) into advertising as a 'mirror to society', reveals how these visual images and rhetoric promote cultural attitudes towards the understanding of both gender and sexuality. In a shocking number of ads that were part of print and visual media, men were depicted as the aggressive, affluent and independent beings where as women were the soft, naive, and dependent selves, except for a few instances where the latter gets depicted as sexually ferocious. For women it was always about either extreme. The sexuality of both gender is however explored much and ironically, in this, the female gender faces no 'discrimination' or scarcity in being fore fronted and highlighted. Most of these ads depict the story of possession, leisure, sex, wealth and luxury.

Every culture has a shared vocabulary with regard to gender and sexuality. The accepted/ acceptable conceptions about these terms however arise from certain attitudes and notions practiced in a society and the Indian cultural scenario harbours societal attitudes which are patriarchal and heteronormative in nature, which would account for the lack of third gender ads. The advertisements promoted in India cater to all ages. Though a certain number of them reflect the change that has come over our traditional conception of gender and sexuality, most of them taken for study, because of their proliferation in comparison to the other, reveal a consolidation of gender definitions that so far existed. For the current study on the impact of media in defining gender roles and sexuality, the advertisement are subsumed under three categories : those that cater to 1) female consumers, mostly young, 2) male consumers ,both young and middle aged and 3) families.

When it comes to women in advertisements, they are mostly associated with glamour, thinness, and fairness, and so, many leading brands like *Fair and Lovely* , *Ponds*, *Dove*, *Lux*, *Panteen*, *Clean and Clear*, *Lakme*, to name a few, sell products meant for personal care and beauty attainment - shampoos

that would make your hair look smoother, bouncier and glossy, the skin care lotions and face creams that would ensure a 'fair and lovely', glowing and 'picture perfect' look; 'luxury' soaps that would make one 'look young and stay young', the ultra slim 'get in shape', the 'white beauty' face wash, one stroke that will give the 'iconic eyes', and the list would never end. These ads sell more than the products; they sell a culture and a set of attitudes that one need to follow if one is to be accommodated into the 'ideal' and real 'new age' woman - a woman who is appealing in looks. The security that these ads project sells, because of the very sense of insecurity created by them. The girls are led to believe that white skin is the standard mark of beauty, that a few pimple spots could get you ostracized from your immediate circle, that being out of shape and getting aged could deduct all your personal and professional prospects and ultimately, a glowing skin, a picture perfect face, and smooth shiny hair could boost your confidence and win for you, the best job and the man of your dreams. However, despite the entire buzz surrounding these ads, it is an illusion, a fantasy that get propagated through these images. They don't aim to boost your inner confidence and self-esteem. They aim only to sell the product and the brand by creating the notion that you are not perfect being the way you are. Yet they can reveal the cultural stand and attitude that our society often takes when it comes to appraising a woman. She is mostly recognized in terms of her external beauty and fairness, however unjustified the codes of judgement be, which reminds us of the reality that these ads still sell. Though media claims to have changed the perceptions of the world, they are infact promoting the same conventional, stereotypical notions under a new guise and vague promises. These ads circulate for those girls who are made to feel insecure about being fat or black, both of which are supposed to doom the girl into unlikely fate. It is simply a marketing strategy that emerged from recycling a few age old prejudices. The women who appear in most of these ads are either celebrity figures or models, whose sensual appeal is often explored to heights, making the product and the brand that sells it even more enticing. It becomes a necessity to own them.

Men, in the advertising world are primarily conceived as possessing

traits of affluence and a sense of freedom that often verges on to rebellion. The ads thus associate men, between the age of 20-35, with adventure, sports, gadgets, cars, women, and open road. And most of them have, with a few exceptions, gathered much criticism owing to the explicit depiction of the sexuality of both genders, sometimes even out of the context. Attention must be drawn to those advertisements of deodorants/perfumes like *Axe*, *Fogg*, *Engage*, *Addiction* to name a few most controversial; of sports/ luxury cars and other items of personal care that are in actual sense meant to maintain a healthy, clean and fresh appearance. These ads can be identified as employing unorthodox ways of exploring gender and sexuality. The visuals, verging onto the unreal, are intense in their depiction; they communicate an often implicit and private desire harboured by our society that is however publically denounced. Most of these ads depict a sensuous male, clothed or seminude, with his intense knowing gaze whose subtle yet powerful moves invite the already vulnerable, equally sensuous and sexually aggressive woman/women. On the surface the visual rhetoric that informs these ads undermine the conventional conceptions related to gender and sexuality, sanctioned by our society. However they reveal the politics behind a privileged heterosexual cultural ideal that depends on gender hierarchy in which men are simply superior to women. The woman here is literally dehumanized, her sexuality is exploited, as the man, whose sexuality is glorified, emerge to own the product, the brand and the woman/women as well. These visuals can have a lasting impact on the young minds of our community.

And lastly there are copious indoor advertisements that sell products ranging from health drinks like Complian, Horlicks, instant/ packaged food and drinks, home appliances and kitchen accessories or even pain relievers which would mostly depict a proper household, with women shown in traditional mundane roles, as an ideal housewife or cool/ good mother whereas men are the hard working providers. It is mostly the ideal Indian household, where the characters assume the most conventional and deemed to be appropriate roles as demanded of their gender. The primary concern of women

in most of the 'family ads', is to fuss over being a good mother by providing her child with 'healthy' foods that would make the child, grow faster, taller and stronger; to worry about using the right detergent, washing powder and toilet cleaner; to satisfy her rather worrisome mother-in-law with tasty dishes or to nurse her husband who comes home tired of work. Women are shown to be more relaxed and satisfied with handling the not so hefty tasks and husbands are shown reveling at the 'simple joys' of their wives. This typical portrayal identifies gender and sexuality within the constraints of existing patriarchal order. The gender symbol and codes that these visuals project forth explicitly reveal and consolidate the popular beliefs upheld in our society. They also reveal the paradoxical attribute that our society upholds, one that of being conventional and progressive at the sometime, especially in entertaining certain gender notions. Today our nation accommodates progress with regard to women education and career and it is true that the present day women seek to empower themselves as being capable of embracing all those labels that were once denied to them. We find women, even 'super women' who could handle and blend to perfection both their professional and personal (family) lives. Yet our nation is childishly adamant in boxing women to the conventional, stereotypical images. However it is no different for the male gender too, as they will have to no matter what, subjects themselves to certain conditions such as being emotionally strong, because shedding tears are signs of unmanliness, independent, and satisfyingly providing. Our conventionalism may not allow for an explicit display of sexuality yet being progressive would allow this explicitness. This duality and confusion in attitudes are reflected in ads that recognizes both extremes

Thus advertisements of today could reveal and there by consolidate or subvert (the instances of which are few in the Indian context) the widely upheld notions on gender and sexuality in our society and the world at large. Yet there will always remain the question regarding the extent of reality that these media generated visual rhetoric convey, when most of it caters to only few selected consumers, leaving behind those who can't afford the 'luxury'; how much of a 'reality' exist in a depiction that centers around a woman who clothes herself

in chocolates to sell a product of chocolate flavoured soap; what convincing message do a visual of man hugging his sports car with a lusting woman beside reveal about their gender positions, and most specifically what stand do media, in this case, the advertising genre takes with regard to informing and representing gender and sexuality in the rapidly developing cultural scenario of present day. It is pertinent that we keep our eyes open and our perceptions clear to be able read through, in between and beyond the visual rhetoric of 'new media'.

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The Role of Folksongs in Preservation of Tribal Culture: A Case Study on Mavilan Tribe

Lillykutty Abraham & Sr. Marykutty Alex,

Music is a powerful art form that touches the core of the being of the singer as well as the listener. Folk music takes a person to a higher realm where one is entirely elated to an enchanted world, through participation in it. The simple nature of folk music enraptures the listener irrespective of his or her educational background. It emanates from within the singer and enters the listener removing the distinction between the two. It unites people of varied interests and backgrounds. Folksongs of Mavilan tribe are rich and varied. They function as an entry point to study the culture of the tribe.

This Article attempts to look at popularisation of folk songs in general and their significance for a tribe in particular. After furnishing an overview of Mavilan tribe the researcher attempts to delve into the role of folksongs in preserving their culture. She tries to glance at the importance of folksongs to the tribe; the theme and structure of the songs; and the need and means to preserve them.

It is noted that indigenous cultural tools, namely folk tales and folk songs have found renewed representation in the mainstream visual media and culture. “A great example of Hollywood embracing folk music is the memorable 1939 John Ford film *Stagecoach*, with its original, Oscar-winning score based on American folk music” (Ledgin 7). A good number of folksongs have been embraced by Bollywood and made their own; for instance, the song *Nimbooda (Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam)*, *Jugni (Cocktail)* or *Engine Ki Seeti (Khoobsurat)*. They have become part of Bollywood that they are now largely identified as

film songs and when we hear these songs the visual images of the movie pop up in our minds. A similar phenomenon can be observed in regional film industry too. In Malayalam film industry, without the folksongs the movie *Celluloid* could have been imperfect. Folk songs fit right in the films that “the viewer does not consciously think, ‘That’s folk music.’ Yet she/he knows it is folk music by the sound and the setting in which it is taking place” (8). *Naadan pattukalper* se are more and more appreciated and enjoyed by the young and old generation of Kerala. As Ledgin observes:

Folk music is a living, breathing, ever-changing form, it cannot remain static, because it has a human face and voice. It conveys our family roots, our ethnicities and cultures, and extends to our next generations. It cannot be separated from our lives because folk music is all about our lives, how we live, what we think, our values and ideologies, our joys and sorrows. (10)

Life evolves naturally and rhythmically for indigenous communities, and songs and dance are integral to their existence. All the life events of the community are accompanied either by song alone or as a combination of both song and dance. They are the symbolic expression of their rhythmic life and are part of their socio cultural identity. For this reason, even a feeble sound of their traditional musical instrument can trigger rhythmic movements in a member of the tribe. Traditionally, they employed songs as one of the effective media of communication. For Mavilan tribe on whom the present study focuses, songs and dance are fundamental to their cultural and social life. Folksongs play a vital role in preserving the endangered culture of the tribe.

Mavilans inhabit Kannur and Kasaragod districts of North Kerala. They are settled mainly in Kasaragod, Hosdurg and Vellarikundutaluks of Kasaragod district and in Iritty, Kannur and Taliparambataluks of Kannur district. A small group of them are also residing in the border areas of Karnataka. According to the census of the year 2011, the total population of Mavilans is 29,590, of whom 14,546 are males and 15,044 are females.

Edgar Thurston, quoting the Madras Census Report, 1901, describes the Mavilans as "a small tribe of shikâris (hunters) and herbalists, who follow makkathâyam (inheritance from father to son), and speak corrupt Tulu" (52). K.K.N. Kurup, writes that the Mavilans are essentially of the Dravidian tribe, and among the original inhabitants of Kerala (47). Kunhambu Mavuvalappil, a Mavilan himself, also suggests that they are the successors of the aboriginal Dravidian tribe of Tulunadu¹ that settled only in the hilly areas near the forests (15). They were hunter-gatherers who relied solely on forest produce and wild life for their sustenance.

As the years went by, Mavilans were forced to adapt to the changes in social status. The system of agricultural serfdom existed in Kannur and Kasaragod districts of Kerala during the early twentieth century (Suresh). The landlords intruded into the habitats of the tribes and eventually became the owners of their lands. The tribal people were not permitted to own land; but were forced to become agricultural labourers. However, the landlords pointed out a small portion of land to the tenants to be used during the tenancy. There was no legal agreement or demarcation of the land. The boundaries were maintained by planting different crops and plants.

Mavilans were skilful agricultural labourers. They followed the *punamkrishi* or 'shifting cultivation' method both for their landlord and themselves. Due to such coercive circumstances, they became backward in their socio economic status. They were listed as Scheduled Caste under the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950. In 2003, they were reenumerated in the category of tribes as amended by the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Orders (Amendment) Act 2002 (Act 10 of 2003) vide Part VII- Kerala-Second Schedule notified in the Gazette of India dated 8 January, 2003.

The community has a rich and varied repertoire of proverbs, riddles, medicinal knowledge, songs, dance, and flair to play the ethnic drum called *thudi* and bamboo drum, indigenous skill for hunting and traditional occupational skills like basket making. In Kannur district, the members of the

tribe speak Malayalam while in Kasaragod they speak Tulu mixed with Malayalam, Kannada and Tamil(Mavuvappil 17).

In the current scenario, Mavilan tribe is caught between tradition and modernity. They are struggling to maintain the originality of their culture, despite the external forces. Yet, due to the “growing interculturalness” they are influenced by the material culture of the mainstream community (Sahu 21). In this context, the rich oral tradition of Mavilan tribe is facing the risk of being on the verge of extinction. Hence it is vital to recognize its importance as well as make it relevant and appealing so that a significant cultural tool of the tribe could be preserved. These songs would in turn help enter the life of the tribe to study their culture. The present study is based on the fieldwork conducted in Mavilan settlements in Kannur and Kasaragod districts of Kerala. The informants belong to Balal, Pallikkara and West Eleri panchayats of Kasaragod district and Eruvessi, Payyavur and Sreekandapuram panchayats of Kannur district.

The informants are both male and female falling under the age group of 70 and above. They do not know their exact age. Some of them are illiterate and a few of them have learned to read and write through adult literacy programme. The other members of the tribe honour and recognise them as elders and tradition bearers. In fact, they were contacted through the younger generation. The elders were open and happy to share their expertise, though it was hard on their part to recall the forgotten bits and pieces of songs. Some of them were physically weak and had to strain themselves to perform. Whenever they sang, except for one informant, the absence of *thudi* was conspicuous. Their songs are so rhythmic that they find it difficult to render it without the accompaniment of *thudi*. Even then, they obliged and performed for the higher cause of learning.

After building rapport with the community, especially with the informants, they talked about their lived experience while recollecting the life of the tribe. The songs were videotaped during the course of conversations. Some of them would explain the meaning and context in between whereas,

others performed uninterrupted. After video recording, the researcher also discussed with them the context and meaning of the song and other relevant information. She also interviewed others, especially, knowledgeable and educated members of the group. The investigator also observed their cultural rituals by staying with them and visiting their places of worship. She has interviewed those who have already conducted any type of study on the tribe as well.

In the beginning it was hard to decipher what the elders were singing. The terms could not be identified. A few of the informants were hard of hearing. Therefore, the communication between both of us also was hindered. There was a communication gap as they could not follow the accent and diction of the researcher and vice versa. Later on, having become familiar to the vocabulary and slang it became easier to understand, for both the groups. Yet, listening to the songs and writing them down is a demanding task as some terms are unfamiliar and the pronunciation of some other words are different from that of the researcher. She also tends to decode the words wrongly as they sound similar to the familiar words. As true to the nature of oral literature the second time when the songs were rendered, the lines were improvised and varied from what had already been written down. Though the researcher gathered more information in the process, she was bewildered as to where to fit in the added data. As she comes to know the tribe, the researcher is apprehensive whether she will be able to comprehend the depth of the meaning conveyed by the songs. She also acknowledges the possibility that, although she has tried to be as authentic as she could, yet being a non-Mavilan, her findings might be coloured by her own perceptions.

Songs have always held an important place in the life of Mavilan community. Songs were sung to the accompaniment of a traditional musical instrument called *Thudi*. The shared music acted as a binding force for the community. The singing of songs gave extra energy and incentive during the *punamkrishi* (shifting cultivation) too. The *Thudikarans* (drummers), usually two of them, with smaller and big *thudies*, would stand in the field, beat their

drums and lead the songs. The workers would carry out their jobs to the accompaniment of the rhythm of the music while singing along. At particular points during the singing, everyone would straighten up and lift up their *parikas*². Some of the more excited workers would even jump up and shout aloud while raising their *parikas*. It was also common for adjacent workers to clang their *parikas* together to intensify the dramatic effect. This 'live musical drama' helped everyone to work without realizing the toughness of the job and enjoy it as a community occasion. It must have created an enthralling synchronisation of music, dance and work, out there in the field.

Songs were sung also during marriage ceremonies. These are known as *mangalampattu*. The members of the bridegroom's party go to the house of the bride to ask formally for the girl. On the way, they sing these songs to the accompaniment of *thudi*. Then both families converge at a place singing and dancing to the rhythmic beating of the drums. Finally, both groups enter the house of the bride, and other rituals begin. In Kasaragod district the marriage ceremony comprised of *mangalamkali*, a dance form.

Folksongs of Mavilans comprise *theyyam* songs too. During the *theyyam* performance, the performer or those who are appointed to assist him sing songs narrating the myth or the story related to the specific *theyyam* being performed. The younger ones who are initiated into *theyyam* are trained to memorise these songs. There is a small group comprising three to four men who sing these songs during the performances. Songs are also sung during the interval between two *theyyams* to fill the gap and at the *aniyara* when the performer gets ready.

The songs of the tribe are related to the life events of a person from conception to death. There are songs for the rituals of piercing the ear of the child; the occasion to mark reaching the stage of puberty and during marriage. Some of the songs are meant for recreation. Adventures of a hero or heroine is another theme of the songs. Their songs are nature based. Most of the songs depict trees, birds and other animals as having life. It could be about how birds, animals or other creatures originated in the world; the narration of an

incident; a legend or a myth; or a moral lesson. Many songs are related to agriculture: paddy seeds, shifting cultivation, harvesting, threshing and storage of grains. Almost all the songs are rooted in a local place and derived from their life situations.

A century ago, the influential folklorist Cecil Sharp opined that “folksongs are the products not of the individual, but of a people or community, and that we are indebted to the process of oral tradition not merely for preserving them, but for moulding, developing, and, in a sense creating them as well” (xix). The oral tradition has given a systematic structure for the songs of Mavilan tribe. The songs follow certain verbal formulas like “set words, word patterns, refrains, and set- pieces of description”(Abrams and Harpham 265). There is no fixed version of songs. From the experience of the researcher, as mentioned earlier each performer renders it differently. The same performer improvises at the next performance. It is also noted that each performer has a set pattern and that it is applied to all the songs in his/her repertoire.

It is common to begin a long song with supplication to God, the supernatural power or for the assistance of ancestors whose presence they could feel. Similarly, these songs are also concluded formally. The long songs also use the numbers beginning from one up to ten or above to describe the course of a long journey, or to narrate a long incident. This helps the singer to recall the events in the songs without any interruption. The song of Chonodum Aaychan recorded from Palayad settlement of Payyavur panchayat performed by Kakkoppuram Kunhraman describes how Aaychan climbs the hills one by one reaching on the top of the tenth one. Enumeration also helps imagine the intensity and significance of the action in the whole context of the song sung. Certain refrains are repeated all through the song. In the case of a heroic achievement, the songs follow a pattern of being called upon to carry out a special task; the hero appears before the lord or the king; he/ she is commissioned with the task after providing necessary equipment; the mission is accomplished and the hero is rewarded. The song of Kunhali documented from the aforementioned informant is an example of this fact. He accomplishes

the adventurous task of taming and bringing back the lost elephants of the king. The king rewards him with his daughter and a half of his kingdom. There are also some other songs that depict the personal initiative of the hero to accomplish a mission. Either the hero or heroine has an inner call or the circumstances lead him/her to action. He/she consults the mother. She tries to discourage her son/daughter with ample reasons. But the self-determined child goes ahead with the initial plan and succeeds. The song of Kunhanitheeri performed by P.M.Karichi, documented from Kolangara settlement of West Eleri Panchayat of Kasaragod district is the story of the exploratory feat of Kunhanitheeri. She takes up the challenge of the ruling *thampuran* to shoot a bunch of thousand mangoes without dropping a single one.

The songs invariably operate as conversation with the subject, be it a bird, a snake, an animal, a tree or another human being. This mode of songs not only personifies the subjects but also impresses the mind of the listener. It leaves an indelible mark in the psyche of the listener. The conversations help the listener to identify the significance of the subject and the place it has in the daily life of the tribe. The dialogue is also a symbol of the democratic attitude of the tribe wherein everyone and everything is assigned a place and dignity. No thing is a thing for the community. Everything has value and a reason for existence.

As Vishnu Namboothiri proposes, folk songs are the reflection of social life. They provide information about the life of people that are not available otherwise. These songs open the door to the life style of the people especially with regard to their festivals, celebrations, rituals, beliefs, cultural functions, customs, and rites after death, recreational activities, genealogy, occupation and the facts related to production. The myths and legends narrated in the songs of the community take us back to several centuries.

As most of the contexts of the songs sung do not exist in its primal form, the songs act as key to their culture and traditions. They reveal to us the method of shifting cultivation, hunting and fishing; the sufferings endured by the community under the landlords; the food culture; customs and habits related

to an individual as well as community and so on. The song of Muthappankotta recorded from Puthusserikotta settlement of Eruvessy panchayat of Kannur district, sung by Raman Avidath, vividly narrates the method of shifting cultivation as practised by the tribe. The song of Puruli performed by P.M. Karichi depicts the dearth of resources for the tribe to survive despite toiling for the land lord. Songs related to the hero or heroine generally have the narration of the growth and development of the protagonist which clearly delineates the customs of *choroottu* (ritually feeding the infant with solid food for the first time), *kathukuthu* (piercing the ear) and his/her growth into a mature person. The songs of Kunhanitheeri recorded from P.M. Karichi and the song of Karimpuli Kannan recorded from Raman Avidath are instances of this.

The song of Nallannangal sung by Kakkoppuram Kunhiraman is a beautiful account of how the Mavilans were specially chosen and commissioned with the task of cultivating *punam* (forest). They have myths and legends substantiating their right and forte in shifting cultivation (Karipath 18). Mavilans were also renowned for their adventurous spirit of taming the wild elephants. Three variants of the song recorded from three different informants vouch for this fact. Many of the songs documented evince a sense of deep relation with the land lords and their dependency on them. The songs also take us to their sense of place. Almost all the long songs (which lasted for 20 to 30 minutes when performed) begin with the mention of place. The local places are consistently mentioned in the song. It is important to note that some of the local places mentioned in the songs have been re-christened with modern names or got merged with the names of nearby towns. Thus, these songs could be an indicator to the local history.

Despite the hardships endured by the community most of the songs manifest resilience of the tribe. In fact, the tribe seems to be celebrating life. The aforementioned song of Puruli is a *mangalamkalipattu* wherein the people of the tribe dance joyfully. As the present generation of Mavilan tribe is removed from the traditional occupation and life style of the past, the folk songs can be of great help to know about the tribe.

There is a decline in the number of people who know these songs. As the older generations are slowly disappearing from the community, it is gradually losing the invaluable treasures of folksongs too. As mentioned earlier these songs were sung in a particular context. Now that most of the contexts remain only in the memory, the songs sung on these occasions are also being forgotten. The younger generation of the tribe are taking up occupations available in the present social set up. Therefore, unless conscious effort is taken, they do not get the chance to learn these songs as in olden days. Since these songs are not recorded in writing, they tend to vanish from among the tribe.

As seen in the current scenario, a distinction between the folk and classical remains. The folk is treated as something to be watched for entertainment. We must be aware that, “folk is not something out there in a museum, to be seen and appreciated from a distance. Rather, it is part and parcel of our modern and postmodern literatures, inspiring and influencing our modern literatures in a way that our classical literatures have done”(Sahu vii).

It is important to value and preserve the folksongs. Let us not forget, “there is folk in all of us. Therefore, it is our responsibility to keep folk music alive”(Ledgin 113). It is heartening to note that a few songs of the community have entered the public arena and have become famous. Although the songs are altered from its original version it still remains in the media with greater access to the general public. Unless deliberate attempts are made by the authorities to value and honour the folk songs, these invaluable treasures will disappear. The warning of Sharp must be heeded to:

The careful preservation, of its folk-music is to a nation a matter of the highest import. Art, like language, is but a method of human expression, due to the development and specialization of qualities that are natural and inborn. If therefore, it is to fulfil this function efficiently, it must never be divorced from, but must always faithfully reflect, those qualities which are peculiar to the nation from which it proceeds. A nation’s music, for instance must at

every stage of its development, be closely related to those spontaneous musical utterances which are the outcome of a purely natural instinct, and which proceed, it will always be found, from those of the community who are least affected by extraneous educational influence –that is, from the folk. (xiv)

The question is how to preserve the songs impervious to the passage of time. One option could be to bring them to the visual media and as far as possible keep the originality of the songs. Otherwise, as Sharp foretold, if we “frankly decorate our folk tunes with the fashionable harmonies of the day, we may make very beautiful and attractive music,... but we shall effectually rob them of their most characteristic folk qualities, and thereby convert them into art-songs indistinguishable from the “composed” songs of the day” (xvi).

To surmise, the findings show that the songs of Mavilan tribe are loaded with rich cultural realities. They not only provide invaluable information about the present life of the tribe but also opens a door to the unique cultural history of the community. They are meant to be transmitted to the present and future generations and could be treated as a medium to preserve their endangered culture. The researcher hopes that these findings are favourable to the greater appreciation of the depth of the thought pattern, imagination, and above all the culture of Mavilan tribe. She hopes that the study may enable further investigation, duly recognising and honouring the tribe for their intrinsic richness.

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Unveiling the Lattices of Women: *The Race* and *The Sun also Rises* - a brief Study of the Selected Works of Pablo Picasso and Ernest Hemmingway

Divya M

Towards the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, a radical change arose in the artistic discipline. By analyzing this transformation, historical residual traces during the era can be witnessed. Between World War I and World War II, the lives of the majority of Americans and Europeans underwent dramatic transformations. This revolution influenced the field of arts along with other fields like science and technology. This change generated a new form for the female roles in the field of arts. The demolition of the war created a change in the female role, as many men were injured and many lost their lives, women were forced to take up responsibilities and were considered equal. Women took up the new role to fill in the vacant space of men. This soaring 'new era women' were represented as the subjects of the writers and artist during the era. This representation of women in both literature and painting can be noticed in the works of Ernest Hemmingway and Pablo Picasso. Hemingway's famous novel *The Sun Also Rises* and Picasso's renowned painting *The Race*, also known as *Two Women Running on the Beach* is investigated and studied in order to understand the portrayal of the women during the post-World War I period. As in the novel, the painting also becomes an eye opener where the physical beauty and the gender restraints of women are discarded and the transformation succeeds leaving behind the traces of the past era.

Picasso was born in the year 1881 and died at the age of ninety-one in the year 1973. He was not only a painter but also a paint maker, ceramicist,

print maker, sculptor, stage designer, play writer and poet who have spent most his adult life in France. *The Race* is one of his frequently highlighted works which was produced closely after the traumatic effects of World War I. This painting was completed in the summer of 1922. The medium used is gouache on plywood and the size is 32.5 x 41.1 cm. Gouache is a type of painting consisting of pigment, binding agent and it is sometimes added inert material, designed to be used in an opaque method. It is similar to the water color but gouache is modified to make it opaque when compared to watercolor.

The Race is a production largely based on the neo-classical style. Neo-classicism originally applies to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century revival of classical motifs, subjects and decorations, with the inspiration from the 1748 excavation of Pompeii and writings of the German archeologist, Winckelmann. Picasso visited some Italian museums of classical arts and Pompeii in the year 1917, and this influence can be traced in the works of the post-war series of colossal figures.

The painting portrays two large half naked gigantic women figures running on a beach. The background is covered with bright blue and dull brown. Freedom to live is one of the major themes that exist in the painting. The vivid blues, the flowing hair, and the elongated brown limbs create a sense of fullness that generates a feeling that this is how life must be lived and war must be abandoned. The effect of World War I has distorted the image of peace and happiness and Picasso recreates this lost element of ecstasy through the painting. *The Race* depicts a background of a bright blue sky and a beach which clearly contrast the sky and two women large in size are half naked and runs widely along the shore with their hands held tight with each other. Like many other paintings of Picasso this one is not perfectly classical and in many ways he is mocking the 'return to order' movement through it. The blue sky with a tint of white clouds merge with the deep blue sea. This brilliant blue background highly contrasts the body and the shore. The face of both are not visible yet the partial representation of face is projected and exemplified. The two women are dressed in classical clothes, yet they are hardly an embodiment of the ideal

classical body. Their hands and feet are exceptionally large and their breasts are exposed. The body of the woman who is placed behind the first one is stretching her legs too far to an unrealistic length. This disjuncture of bodies of the two women emphasizes their largeness.

The picture represents unleashed frenzy and passion. In a different perspective the usual classical feminine figures are mocked by Picasso through this painting where the body is out of proportion and less feminine. Despite the classical characters, this painting is clearly not classical in nature. The painting depicts a strong sense of motion. The strong cult of sports and race prevailed during the nineteen twenties is also highlighted in this painting.

Just as Picasso is to the world of painting so is Hemingway to the world of literature. Ernest Hemingway was an American author and journalist who was born on July 21, 1899 at Oak Park in United States. As Hemingway once said, "There is nothing to writing. All you do is sitting down at a typewriter and bleed" this essence of his life and emotions are embedded in the novel *The Sun Also Rises*. The male protagonist Jake Barnes who is a representation of the author himself clearly shadows Hemingway's emotions and experiences. These elements of war and post war experiences became major influence of his two famous fictions: *The Sun also Rises* and *A Farewell to Arms*.

The novel *The Sun also Rises* features the experience of a group of people after World War I. The story is told in first person by the protagonist 'Jake Barnes', an American newspaper correspondent in Paris. Jake and his expatriate friends live in a sensual and self-indulged world of post World War I Paris. Along with Jake, the other two major characters which form the backbone of novel are Robert Cohn who is a weak willed Princeton graduate and an unsuccessful writer, and Lady Brett Ashley who is an exciting, beautiful and unpredictable British divorcee.

The traces of war which left Jake impotent are the reason for Jake and Brett to stay apart even though they are in love with each other. This chaotic relationship between the characters is portrayed quite well. Cohn fell in love just as any other would, with Brett. In spite of not fully in love with Cohn she

goes for a secret trip with him to a Spanish resort town of San Sebastian. Despite the chaos, occurring around her she is engaged to a wealthy, charming and utterly clumsy drunkard Mike. Bill who is introduced as Jake's friend return to Paris after a trip and the plan is to camp in Spain to enjoy fishing and bullfight in Pamplona. Finally, during the trip Bill and Jake meet up with Brett, Mike and Cohn for a weeklong entertainment of bullfight, alcohol and high drama. After witnessing the bullfight, Brett commits in an affair with a talented bullfighter Pedro Romero. Cohn's infatuation and desire for Brett leads him to fight with everyone. And he physically injures Romero. As the fiesta ends, they all split up and leave Pamplona. Jake heads to San Sebastian for a while in solitude but by the influence of Brett's frequent telegrams, he moves forward to find her in Madrid. He finds her there alone having sent Romero away. They open up to each other agreeing that even though they love each other they cannot be together. The story ends here while they look forward to their bleak future.

The American writer Gertrude Stein was the key figure in the lives of both Ernest Hemingway and Pablo Picasso. It is through Stein that Picasso and Hemingway met each other for the first time and later on the relation between them stayed strong until death. Picasso's ever-evolving style made him one of the most original and prolific painters of all time .

Picasso's paintings can be classified into different eras which include The Rose Period , The Blue Period, Cubist Period, Neoclassical Period etc. *The Race* was conceived during the neoclassical era in the beginning of twentieth century. There were a series of paintings depicting the same qualities in this era. The anatomies of the figure are similar in these paintings. Where elements of cubism is also shown to a high extent.

The massive, heavily modeled features of these imposing women recall Picasso's interest in antique roman statuary. In a series of colossal women produced in the years 1920 to 1923 we find the same rimmed eyes same nose extending from an eyebrow, and same folds of cloth Jean Cocteau described this type of women

as (the goddess) Juno. Picasso's return to ancient roots came shortly after a trip to Italy inspiring him to develop monumental. These figures are inspired by a painting from the ancient roman site of Herculaneum (now in the museum of Naples). The painting combines classical figures and cubist still life's in a kind of manifesto of Picasso's art of that period .As early as 1914 ,cubist effects coexisted with first inklings of classical draftsmanship . His return to figuration therefore predated the general 'return to order' that characterized the French art seen after World War I (Jacques 68)

After cubism, Picasso returned to more traditional patterns which is more of classical in tone. A typical example of this new style is the painting *The Race*. From time to time, he would return to cubism. The traces of this effect is also seen in the paintings. The vivid blues and the flowing hair here are anchored in the elongated brown limbs, twisted yet flexible. The forgotten image of freedom and happiness is recreated through these images. Women are concealed and neglected in the society, this bias is destroyed in the painting. He recreates the same oppressed image of women during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and gives them freedom in his painting. The anatomy is provided less precision and their dress fall off, which produces a new kind of imagery. In the painting the artist emphasis on the lost freedom of the early twentieth century people. He reminds people to look back and reproduce the lost liberty.

In *The Race*, the bodies of the classical women are heavily distorted. Usually artists apply this physical form on male subjects to highlight the masculinity, whereas here Picasso applies these elements on his female subjects to make them mannish. Despite the traditional clothes, they appear clumsy and wild. The distortions are striking and are given powerful sculptural presence. Picasso misleads the classicism of his paintings using these techniques. The limbs project themselves in such a way that they expose

unrealistically, as a result a three dimensional figure is conceived. The traces of cubism is left visible in the painting.

In the traditional belief exposure of upper body of women represent liberty and freedom, this is expressed through this work. Their hands are raised upwards holding one another facing the sky, thus symbolizing unity and power. The other two hands are left free where the hand of the first figure is slightly shorter than the other and is let loose with the wind and is left behind her body while the other hand of the second women is stretched forward against the wind. The classical dresses represent the classical element but the gigantic figures mock the classical cliché of women figures who are exceptionally beautiful and feminine. It can also be considered that the masculinity in the figures represent the masculine roles women took up during the era of the lost generation after the world war I. Beauty is frequently attributed to female subjects in painting but in this work Picasso distorts such a belief and creates a new angle. The subjects run in a masculine manner, this stress on motion and the manner is a highlight in the work which destroys the usual feminine manner.

Beach is a regular element in the works of Pablo Picasso and it is visible in this painting too. Beach is a representation of leisure and relaxation. This element of leisure is decorated in the work. The two women in the painting presents the amount of leisure they experience and that is one of the main reasons why the background is set in the sea shore. This painting is a monument to the new freedom that swept the world after the First World War. At the time, the stiff conventions of the Victorian age were thrown off. In this work, he portrays, women who resemble Greek mythological maenads run in loose Grecian dresses that hang down to reveal big, round breasts with their hair flowing freely, they hold hands in pure abandon.

The disproportion in anatomy is indented to highlight the motion of the figures. The second woman is slightly placed forward to show her speed and movement. Her one leg is stretched back to an unrealistic length and the other leg is placed forward than the first figure to show her position. The position of the face is also vital. The first figure has a representation of her face to that of

a crescent moon exhibiting only half the features of her face while the second figure turns her face away hiding from the viewer the features of her face. The painting has no final additions. Unlike the other paintings of Picasso, which he redoes, and produces a perfect image. Here he does not do any final additions. Thus the roughness of the painting remains. The painting depicts the traces of sculpture in it. Other than the three dimensional effect there is a certain sculptural traces sustaining in the painting. The most important feature of the painting is the perspective in which the figure is illustrated. A new outlook for the theory of perspective is introduced by Picasso.

Picasso's bold talent of experimenting techniques and deconstructing traditional norms are applied in this painting too. Women are usually symbolized to depict purity, charm and other values, but here in this painting Picasso neglects such social norms and construct a new identity for women, by highlighting the fact that men and women are equal .this equality is represented through the masculine anatomy of the women. In other words he mocks the classical representation of women by disfiguring and allowing his figures to move freely by destroying the barriers of beauty.

Hemmingway is no different from Picasso taking his talent into consideration. Hemmingway revolutionized fiction with his brief, reportorial prose and his technique of leaving much of the story untold, relying on the reader's intuition and imagination to fill in the details. *The Sun also Rises* documents the shift in gender constructions that followed World War I and the societal effects of that shift. Brett and Jake the protagonists of the novel are understood to embody the 'new gender' relations. Brett, the New Woman, is created in a modern appearance "She was built with curves like the hull of a racing yacht, and you missed none of it with that wool Jersey " (*The Sun also Rises* 22).

Hemmingway, through the character of Brett, has tried to highlight the sexual stance and resulting gender conflicts of his time. For example, in spite of the fact they love each other, Brett's sexual liberation and selfishness of her modern refusal to suppress or overlook her own sexual needs make Jake's

impotence a fatal obstacle. Though she loves Jake, she is unwilling to commit to a relationship with him because it will mean giving up sex. Indeed, she is unwilling to commit fully to any of the many men who become infatuated with her, though she has affairs with a number of them. In the beginning of the novel, she is seeking a divorce from her second husband, Baronet Ashley. Her first husband died of dysentery during the war. She has agreed to marry Mike Campbell, a Scotsman, after the approval of her divorce. She fancies herself a modern, independent woman who is the equal of man. A new perspective to women has been shaped through Brett.

The conversation between Brett and Jake in the taxi while returning from the party reveals the central problem of the novel. It indicates that they love each other, they feel there is nothing they can do about it and it is painful and destructive for them to be together. The problem for Brett is that she needs the companionship of a man who can fulfill her physical and psychological needs. But Jake's inability to offer her a brief sexual pleasure even lets her stay away from a serious relationship with Jake. Both know that Jake has limitations in this regard due to his wartime injuries; therefore, they arrive on the conclusion: 'There's not a damn thing we could do,' I said. 'I don't know.' She said. 'I don't want to go through the hell again.' 'We better keep away from each other' (Hemingway 23).

The depth of the dilemma continues even after this conversation. When Brett comes to Jake's apartment with Count Mippipopolous and reveals that the Count offered her money to spend a weekend with him, Jake's anguish gets renewed because of his inability to fulfill her libido. Brett's attire is different from the usual and which creates a bold touch to her character and the usual attire of women during the time. Brett's tight sweaters and short hair, gregarious manner, and social liberties amaze the women of Pamplona and they constantly stare at her throughout the fiesta.

Brett has never seen a bullfight before and Jake explains it all to her in great details. Far from being repulsed, she is fascinated and wants to sit in the front row, close to the action. This incident clarifies Brett's mannish passions

by her attraction towards violence and action. In spite of being a womanly figure, she has her obsessions similar to that of a man's. She is fascinated by the ritual violence in the ring, a counterpart of the sexual violence all around her. Brett is very much attracted to Pedro Romero, the nineteen year old bull fighter from Ronda. The operative emotion would seem to be lust, not love because before she even speaks to him, she has decided to seduce him. The freedom availed to men by the society is given to Brett in this novel and thus a new form of women is exposed.

Although Jake Barnes is the protagonist of *The Sun also Rises*, Brett serves as the novel's center, its objective focus. She is the 'sun' around which the other characters orbit. Engaged to Mike, in love with Jake, disgusted by Cohn, and infatuated with Romero, Brett's feelings are often masked by her charming appearance. In another sense we can consider Brett as a rising woman, whom when compared to the sun is more rising, thus the title refers to the sun being inferior to Brett, which indicates the fact that the sun also rises but not as splendid as the 'new era women' who is represented through Brett.

Hemingway uses the character of Brett to redefine the preexisting gender roles for women and men in the twentieth century by revealing that manly, alcoholic, and emotionally callous women can still be loveable. Robert and Romero cannot handle Brett the way that she naturally is so they wish to marry her so that they can feminize her to meet their standards. The standards were established by their upbringing. It is interesting to note that Romero grows up in Spain, and Robert grows up in the United States, yet their expectations of the female gender remain nearly identical. Thus representing the whole patriarchal system present in the world. It is because of those standards that Brett chooses to leave both of these men because she refuses to compromise her sexual identity for them. In the end, Brett's independence does not bother Jake enough for him to stop pursuing her .

For a thorough understanding of full complexity of her character it is required that she be considered in contrast to other women in the novel. Robert's wife, who was wealthy, left him for 'a miniature painter' . She can be perceived

as an extreme case of 'new woman' who values her personal and sexual freedom in relation to her social obligations. Brett adopts a similar step when she goes with Robert Cohn. Another female character is Frances Clyne who stands in contrast to Brett. Brett's character is loving and is without constraints but Frances is dominant, jealous, possessive and determined to marry Robert. Frances' "attitude toward Robert changed from one of careless possession and exploitation to the absolute determination that he should marry her" (5).

The prostitute Georgette Hobin functions in the novel as a different female representation. As a prostitute with a sexually transmitted disease, Georgette embodies the degradation of sex for money, a point underscored by her bad teeth and disastrous smile. This is persistently set in contrast to Brett who loves Paris and refuses a great deal of money to go away with Count Mippipopolous.

Another character is Edna, the extraordinary attractive young woman Bill met at Biarritz. Mike speaks to her in terms that parallel those of the earlier scene with Brett. Mike says: "I say, she is a lovely girl. Where have I been ? Where have I been looking all this while? You're a lovely thing" (Hemingway 180). However, Brett is the strongest, most conventionally "masculine" character in the novel, dominating her lovers and manipulating them like a bull-fighter. She has a short haircut and refers to herself as a 'chap'. But in her carelessly dominating relationships with Jake, Mike, Cohn, and Romero, she appears to let them be dependent on her and she needs men to let her be dominant.

The Sun also Rises and *The Race* have been hailed worldwide as works of absolute importance from their first publication in the year 1926 and 1922 respectively since they highlighted the fact of women coming forward and the ill effects of wars that not only destroy the present generation but the traces of war which remain in the future generations. Scrutinizing both the works, the representation of women are clearly out standing in both the cases though the medium is different, the representation is quiet similar. Brett Ashley is the female protagonist around whom the whole story of *The Sun also Rises* revolves.

This is a new ideology where women are the central figures. Picasso applies the same ideology in his painting *Two Women Running on the Beach* where he uses two women as the subjects of his work to display the forgotten elements of human values due to the effects of war.

Both the works can be considered a call to stop and think about the social inequalities showed against women. The most important aspect of the novel is that it questions the rudeness of the society against women by empowering them and letting these bold characters face the social norms with opposition. These against the grain characters created a revolutionary change in the literary flow of the twentieth century. As in the novel the painting also becomes an eye opener where the physical beauty and the gender restraint of women are discarded. Both Hemingway and Picasso represent women who have a universal identity.

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Reverberation and Multiplicity in the Visual Medium

Premanand M E & Subin Varghese

‘A picture speaks thousand times than words’ stands true in the case of films. The thought that strikes one’s mind when he thinks of his favourite movie is not about the Director or the songs, but a particular scene or maybe even many scenes that shook his thought processes. This feature of a visual medium is what makes it special. Alexander Steele, in his essay “Film Is a Visual Medium”, says that the images of a movie can themselves imprint images into our psyches. For instance, when we think of the movie “Vellanakalude Naadu”, what comes to our mind in a fraction of a second is a particular scene. Here the character, C Pavitran Nair (enacted by Mohanlal) and his friends try to transport a Road Roller with the help of an Elephant, and this is one of the funniest scenes in the movie. Mentioned above is just an example. There may be many such examples which each viewer has to point out. A dialogue from the Drishyam directed by Jeethu Joseph will substantiate the argument. The police officer, performed by Asha Sarath tries to explain how films imprint well on its viewers.

At the same time, the theory of Dhvani, developed by Abhinav Guptha and Anandavardhana and improved by Bharatha, plays a pivotal role in Indian aesthetics. Both Rasa theory and Dhvani theory go hand in hand. While the theory of Dhvani deals with Semantics, Rasa Sidhanadha, is purely based on the Affective theory. As the word suggests, Dhvani in Sanskrit is echo or resonance that is generated in a viewer’s mind about the stated yet unstated meanings aroused by visuals or word/dialogues in a poem or drama.

Elements of speech cannot be eliminated from any art, whether it is poetry, prose, drama, film, or any such discourses. Since its evolution, the aesthetic theory has been related to literature and especially to poetry. Dhvani is said to be the soul of the poetry of which words are considered the body. The body of poetry can be studied with the knowledge of grammar and a dictionary, but it is hard to find out the Dhvani of the poem without understanding the expressed meaning. It does not mean that the primary meanings are worthless; instead the hidden meaning is more significant. Utterances always have a literal sense; simultaneously it might go a step further by giving the audience a suggested meaning. Dhvani School of criticism is into this reverberance or the suggested multiple meanings. What this paper deals with is how the multiplicity of meanings plays a role in conveying the story to the audience.

Movies, be it from Hollywood, Mollywood, Bollywood or any other language, always have a further meaning in it. This secondary meaning might not be familiar to an ordinary viewer. Many comic scenes, dialogues or actions in most of the movies give suggestive meanings to the viewers, but most of them do not attain their goal or sometimes even leave a wrong impression on the spectators. The ability to understand the Dhvani of films differs from individual to individual. Some may be very quick in grasping ideas, and they may “Laugh Out Loud” while others may still wait for their ‘muse’ to trigger the laughter. There might have been situations when one just became blank-faced while others guffawed during the action of a funny scene or comprehending the Dhvani of a particular dialogue. It happens because the “others” went through the literal meaning and not the implied meaning.

Visuals and dialogues are both inevitable for a film. The director of a movie might use visuals rather than dialogues to communicate the story with his audience. At the same time, the same director may highlight dialogues instead of visuals at times. It varies according to the situation in movies. Most of the viewers do not bother about why it happened but instead enjoy the film and never again think about it. Mentioned below are some instances taken from a few Malayalam movies.

Gangster, a Malayalam movie directed by Ashiq Abu is an example where one can see the use of implied meaning throughout the film. Even though the film did not entertain the audience of all ages, it is replete with innovative techniques and novel methods of storytelling. Mollywood viewers were not familiar with lengthy 2D animation and that turned out to be a drawback for the movie that used almost 12 minutes of story narration with the aid of animation. Violence and bloodshed certified the film with an 'A' certification that again imprinted a black mark. However, a viewer with keen observation can find that the director has brought out implied meanings through the visuals of animation even. One such example is when the character of Akbar enacted by Padmasree Mammooty shoots another unknown character who was praying before a lighted lamp, and the person falls back over the lighted lamp that puts out the light. Here the light of the lamp suggests human life. Light blown out signifies the death of the individual. Another notable instance of Dhvani is seen in the 24th minute of the film where there is a symbolic representation through which the director conveys the change of leadership among the gangs and how Akbar emerges the leader. This visualisation enhances the dialogues of the other characters.

There are also scenes in this movie where dialogues are given more prominence than visuals. One such situation is when the character of Lilly, acted by Aparna Menon replies to Anto through the lines of an old song. Anto inquires about their meeting, and the answer is "*swapnangal...*" suggesting that the act of meeting each other will never happen. Later in the 52nd minute of the movie, Akbar drinks from a cup that has 'FCUK YOU' on the bottom. This is the only reply he has to give to Anto. Meaning is evident, and the shot has its Dhvani that what Anto has asked for is never going to happen.

Lijo Jose Pallissery's Amen is another movie in which the director himself has added suggestive meanings to many shots and scenes. The role of the toddy tapper in this film is noticeable. A saying also goes that they have their 'eyes on the sky'. Some even go to the extent of elevating them to the status of visionaries as their eye level ranges above that of the others. Looking from the

perspective of the toddy tapper in Amen, one can see the story unfolding in another beautiful manner. Due to their job, they are forced to be up on the coconut trees to extract toddy. This character carries the role of a great visionary than a mere laborer. His views are always above and beyond that of any other character in the movie. These toddy tappers are said to hold private and confidential family secrets of olden times and can be considered as drones of this century. The director efficiently uses the drawer to convey implied meanings to his audience. It is noteworthy that these 'eyes over the skies' has his opinion or suggestion for every problem going on the land. Sometimes he feels pity for Solomon, the protagonist of the movie, but fails most of the time in achieving his aims. There are also suggestions made by the toddy tapper that the saint has already arrived earlier and relates the entry of Chevalier Pothachan as a Snake or a Horse, both related to the saint. The word snake has an implied meaning of being drunk because people who are drunk are also referred to as 'snakes'. The sentence only gains its sense towards the end of the movie when the audience comes to know that Fr. Vattoli, performed by Indrajith was none other than the saint himself.

An instance from the movie 'Pranchiyettan and the Saint' directed by Ranjith, provides the inner meaning that human beings and God are two sides of the same coin. The character of Pranchiyettan was terribly upset about the failures in his life when all of a sudden he meets the Saint from the church to whom he opens his heart. The story of the movie goes through the point of Francis, who describes all his sorrows and drawbacks. The saint listens to Pranchi and reveals that the actual life of the 'happiest' people is nothing but a sheer adjustment. Later at the end of the movie, when Pranchi rushes to the saint along with Pauly, another character, he finds the saint has disappeared. Even though he is disappointed, he is happy that he could meet the saint for real. Through the whole movie, the director suggests that God is present in each one of us. To see God, one should take a look at oneself, because if it was a saint for real that Pranchi had seen, how come the saint was unaware of the problems of a human being? A saint speaking Thrissur slang, trying to imitate the actions done by Pauly and satirizing the thoughts of dubiety are all portraits

of suggestive meanings given by the director.

Another movie directed by Ranjith, *Paleri Manikyam* also has many illustrations of multiple meanings through his shots. In a particular scene where the character of Mammooty, Khalid Ahmed shoots himself, the director conveys that there was no option other than shooting himself through a visual. For this, the director uses a particular shot where he shows the audience as a group of people struggling to get out of a room through a single door. This particular shot brings out the idea that Khalid did not have any other option other than shooting himself.

There are many such examples that can be picked out from the whole Malayalam film industry. This paper was an attempt to find out the Dhvani or multiplicity of meanings as depicted in selected Malayalam movies. It is evident that each director conveys a different set of meanings using diverse techniques including visuals and dialogues. Their interpretation lies in the hands of the Sahrudaya.

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The Politics of Persuasion: A Semiotic Analysis of Language of Advertisements

Anu Antony

Semiotics as per definition is about the study of signs and the meanings they generate. A semiotic analysis makes an attempt to decode the literal meanings of signs present in an advertisement, and studies how they establish an ideology together with the manipulation of a persuasive message. Ads are not invisible conveyors of messages or transparent reflections of reality; they are specific discourses of signs.

This article intends to analyse literal and visual signs in nine different advertisements of cars. For the purpose of analysis, they have been grouped under three heads. The first three ads come under the theme of power/masculinity/aggression. The second group of ads together create an image of gender stereotypes, i.e. woman as the object in patriarchal restraints. The third category falls under a related theme which works on guilt, luxury and illusion of happiness.



Fig. 1 Advertisement of Ford Cobra



Fig. 2 Advertisement of Dodge Chrysler



Fig. 3 Advertisement of BMWX5

The advertisements are categorized like this in order to understand how the persuasive strategy is worked out to build images, and how it influences attitudes, emotions and establishes an ideology. The first three advertisements (*Ford cobra*, *Dodge Chrysler*, *BMW5*) can be read in the terms of aggression, masculinity and power.

The figure 1 features the advertisement of the *Ford Classic*; the *Cobra*, which is a typical sports car. The advertisement strongly asserts its message through the thematic connection between words and images. The visual sign in the advertisement consists of the photograph of a man who is wearing gloves and about to drive the car. And it is set in the background of a desert. Above the image, are the words: “Cobra bites man”. Here the car is metaphorically associated to the intimidating image of a cobra. The visual image also supports this notion, since the man who is about to drive the car is featured as someone who is about to handle a snake. Through this association, the car acquires the power, strength, aggression and intimidation, which are the attributes of cobra. Again the word ‘bites’ in the caption ‘cobra bites man’ become a synonym for ‘excite’ or ‘arouse’. The car excites the adventurous spirit in man.

This meaning is not conceived at the literal level. But the message can be understood from the explanation according to the context and identification

with the brand *Ford Cobra*. It is also worthwhile to note here the caption 'Both Live'. The advertiser intends to convey the idea of symbiotic hegemony, that is, the snake and man become one. In more clear terms, it means that by driving the car, the man also acquires the power and strength of a Cobra. In the process the advertisement redefines an idealized masculinity in terms of aggression and violence.

The Figure 2 is the advertisement of *Dodge Chrysler's Six Pack* series, which is also a sports car. Like the previous ad, this also builds up the image of power and aggression. The main signifiers of this advertisement are the visual image of the car and the verbal caption "Six Pack to go!". The advertisement brilliantly establishes the idea of masculinity through the name of its brand series "Six Pack" and connotative association with the caption. The message proposes the perception of fitting the meaning within the terms of the classical American muscle car. The message is further strengthened by the visual image of the man driving the car. It gives the idea that if you are seen inside a muscle car, you are a muscle man. The term 'six pack' literally means the abdominal muscles that are very strong and that can be seen clearly across the stomach; suggestive of an obvious parallel between the car and its natural owner: The muscle man. Like the previous ad which attributes aggression and strength of snake to man, this particular advertisement also redefines the idea of masculinity. This also illustrates Valentin Voloshinov's argument, "whenever a sign is present, an ideology is present too". In the case of this ad, this ideology is the one which reflects the courage, athleticism and individuality of the western male excelling in a predominantly white western sport.

The Figure 3 is a strong illustration of the way in which advert works predominantly on its visual imagery and the brand identity. It is the advertisement for *BMW X 5* series. The advertisement does not project the visual image of car like the previous ads. It does not employ any literal signifiers to boost the image of the product. But the important point to be noted here is how the visual appeal could be translated into an effective selling message. And the

persuasive element of the ad relies on the brand image of the luxury model *BMW*.

The main signifier of this ad is the graphic illustration of a visual imagery, i.e.; the image of two grills. But the message may not be understood by a reader who, for the first time, comes to know about this particular brand. The Grill of *BMW* shown in the ad is such a symbol which is used with the aim of targeting the product at an audience familiar with, and sympathetic to, its relevant cultural signifiers.

The visual image of horses is a metaphorical representation to symbolize the engine power of the car. Horse power is also a unit for measuring the power of the engine. So, without any factual information or linguistic captions, the two visual signifiers serve the message of the advertisement at a connotative level.

The three advertisements discussed above employ signs in different ways, but construct a common ideology. Signs often produce different levels of understandings and the signifier-signified relationship is not static. But, reading in the terms of context and culture, these ads build up a structure of its own. It builds up an ideology of power which in turn influences the attitude. The power becomes a synonym for the various attributes such as aggression, masculinity, intimidation etc.



Fig. 4 Advertisement of Plymouth Barracuda

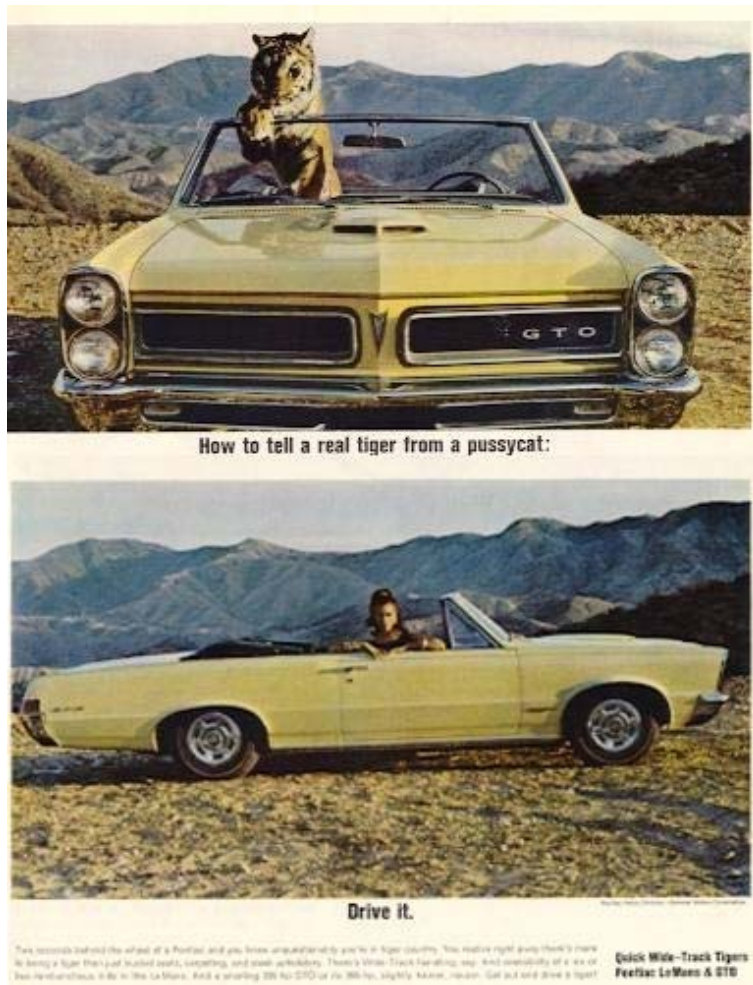


Fig. 5 Advertisement of GTO



Fig. 6 Advertisement of Dodge CHARGER RT

The second group of advertisements (*Plymouth Barracuda*, *Pontiac GTO*, *Dodge CHARGER RT*) are the examples of adverts which all feature woman as a commodity through their visual and literal signifiers. The discussion of the following ads examine how such a message is conveyed through the representation of gender.

The Figure 4 is an advertisement for the *Plymouth Barracuda*. The woman is signified as an object to be looked at and as a symbol which boosts the image in terms of sexual connotations. The linguistic caption for the ad is given in the second half and goes: "It's even prettier underneath". Besides the caption, the two images which display both the outer and inner parts of the car are also given. However these visual images alone certainly do not convey this centrally signified concept, for this is only guaranteed by the inclusion of the statement: "It's even prettier underneath". Thus a strong undertone is allowed to be forged between the visual signifier (photographic image of car and a woman) and the verbal signifier. The photograph of the woman can be taken as a visual metaphor. Syntagmatically the body language of the woman is used as a strong communicative element in the narrative sequence of the ad.

This idea has been explored by Judith Williamson in her book *Decoding Advertisements*. It is of course the role of advertiser to differentiate similar products from each other and they do this by associating the product with a specific set of social value – in semiotic terms, creating distinct signifiers for it. It is this factor which identifies the woman in the visual with the product. Again, a connotative meaning is implied through linguistic-verbal codification between the term 'unseen anatomy' and the woman sitting behind the seat in the third picture. The features that are attributed to the car are then identified with the woman, though there does not exist any explicit relation. The visual image supported by the text (message) provides a strong undertone on the connotative level.

The figure 5 is the advertisement for the *Pontiac GTO*. The advertisement incorporates two photographs as visual signifiers. The first one displays the image of a tiger standing inside the car and this photograph provides

the front view of the car which clearly indicates its brand also. Below this image, there is the picture of woman sitting inside the car and it displays the side view of the car. And these two images are separated by the caption: “How to tell a real tiger from a pussy cat.”

The image conveys a notion that the tiger is the owner of the car. The message can also be comprehended as the stereotyped association of tiger to the alpha male prototype. This meaning acquires signification through the juxtaposition with the portrayal of the woman in the second image. Again it is obvious that she is identified with the literal signifier ‘pussy cat’, which is a derogatory term. The gestures, body language and the positioning of the female build up a false ideology when it is contrasted with the dominant authoritative portrayal of the tiger. The ad may perhaps signify the idea that the pussy cat (Female) will acquire the power and strength of tiger through the consumption of the particular product.

The figure 6 features the advertisement for the model *Dodge CHARGER RT*. The visual linguistic codification strengthens the perception of the message of the ad. The verbal caption, ‘The Eternal Triangle’ determines the position of male, female and the advertised product, car in an established paradigm. It works on the stereotyped identification of male as the dominant figure. The verbal and visual language of this advertisement is comprehended in the terms of patriarchal conceptualization of the society.

‘Eternal Triangle’ is a rhetorical trope used here for the paradigm and it symbolizes something which does not have stability. Here the eternal triangle consists of a male, female and the advertised car. The eternal triangle suggests the possibility of a conflict since it does not withhold the stable existence of three at a time. And it is understood from the text that it is the position of female which is likely to be expelled. The advertisement adopts the technique of a figurative story to catch the attention of the target audience. The man is the most important sign in this ad. He is the focus point and the leader. The car and the women are subjected to him. This could be interpreted as having a covert sexist slant.

These commercial messages use images and representation of women as central component of their strategy to get attention and also to persuade the buyer. She is just a pretty object, perhaps prettier underneath, merely a pussy cat and perhaps the dispensable angle of the eternal triangle. Advertisements draw heavily upon the domain of gender display-not the way that men and women actually behave but the ways in which we think men and women should behave. It is because these conventions of gender display are so easily recognized by the audience that they figure so prominently in image system.



Fig. 7 Advertisement of Ford



Fig. 8 Advertisement of BMW 3 Series

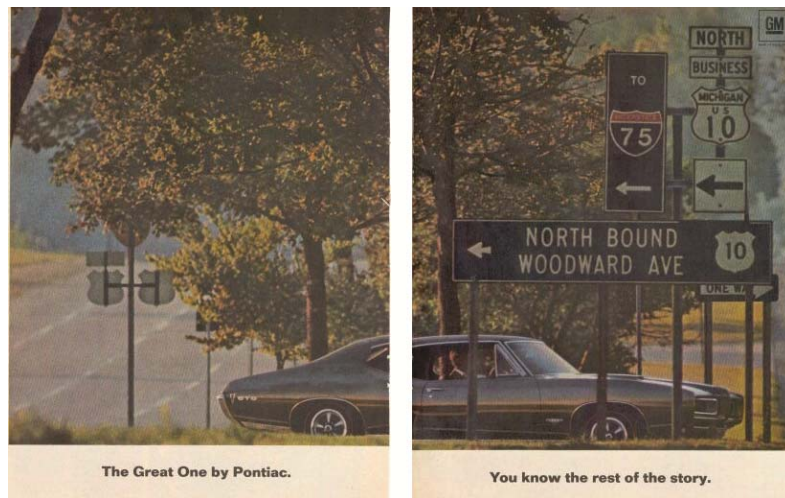


Fig. 9 Advertisement of Pontiac

The last group of advertisements (*Ford, BMW3 and Pontiac*) are examples referring to images of luxury, desire, satisfaction and glamour. The conditions that people are searching for-what they perceive will make them happy-are things such as having personal autonomy, self-esteem, a happy family life and a relaxed tension free leisure time. The signifiers used in the following ads signify these as sources of satisfaction. They do not work by creating values and attitudes out of nothing but by drawing upon and re-challenging concerns that the target audience (and the culture) already shares.

The Figure 7 features the advertisement for the new model of *Ford*. The car is presented as an extension of an elite life style. The advertisement portrays the colourful photograph of the couple with the background view of a typical upper middle class home. The images and signs used in this ad provide the picture of a satisfactory life style that is upper class and elite.

The rhetorical question in the ad, “Is something missing from your life?” demands a response from the audience. The persuasive strategy of the ad builds a fantasy for the consumer of what life can be. Lacan argues that people are motivated by the feel of lack, and subsequent desire, but lack can never be completely fulfilled. The advertiser has used here this consumer’s anxiety to make the product seem necessary. The verbs used in the ad such as ‘missing’ and ‘Fill’ substantiate the argument of Lacan. The visual and verbal signifiers

used in this ad exemplify the idea to produce the intended meaning. Simultaneously it consolidates a fictional notion of life's "perfection" achieved in bourgeois terms. Perfection here is equated to upper middle class lifestyle which is assumed to ensure satisfaction.

The Figure 8 is the advertisement for *BMW-3 series*. The theme of the previous ad of *BMW 5 series* is completely different when compared with this ad. Logic is not the only means of persuasion in ads. Emotions too can persuade. This ad constructs an identity through a particular product that inhabit lives. The visual signifier of the ad is the photograph of the particular car being driven by a man. The background visual provides the vast scenic imagery of a blue sky. It is strengthened by the linguistic metaphor, "Just like Heaven". The image of white clouds which spreads throughout the sky supports the romantic association of the signifiers. It signifies a carefree, romantic and relaxed life. The readers are made to construct identification with the products and the signifiers. The object world interacts with the human world at the most basic and fundamental levels, performing seemingly magical feats of enhancement and transformation. Vestergaard and Schroder explain this as

Advertising does not simply reflect the real world as we experience it: the world portrayed in advertisements moves on a day-dream level, which implies a dissatisfaction with the real world expressed through imaginary representations of the future as it might be a Utopia (122)

The Figure 9 is the advertisement for *Pontiac*. This advertisement has used the visual signs effectively to produce the meaning. Like the previous ad the signifiers of this advertisement also connote the themes of leisure and relaxation. It acts on the inner craving of man to get rid of the humdrum of hectic life. The main visual signifier of this ad is the signboard, which shows the direction to different streets. It connotes the idea that one can leave behind the tedium and monotony of business life. The ad does not tell us anything about the product but of how things are connected to the important domains of our life.

The unifying theme of these three ads is that the depicted product will improve consumer's life, proposing a language of transformation. It builds a fantasy for the consumer of what life can be. Consumers are led to believe that such a life can be achieved through consumption. The ad for *Ford* is an example of a guilt-inducing advertisement. It induces in the target-audience a sense of guilt when they ignore the product. And the ads of *BMW3* and *Pontiac* convey their meaning through the association of psychological desires inherent in people.

All the ads discussed in this article in one way or other, draw us to participate in generating meaning by producing an absence for us to fill. This absence, at its deepest level, is to be filled by us. We are to fit ourselves into the hollow that it provides.

Yet in the process it sells different ideologies too. As discussed in the first group of advertisements, it consolidates the images of aggression, machismo and power. What these ads connotatively suggest is that such attributes can be acquired through the consumption of the product. And in the second group of ads, it is obvious that they restate the stereotyped patriarchal ideology. The third group of adverts are built on the ideology of luxury and relaxation. It constructs the necessity of a change in the lives, bringing into surface, the inherent desires of man.

The afore mentioned discussions elucidate the semiotic significance of advertisements in terms of constructed association. These advertisements translate statements from the world of things into a form, which means something in terms of people. They create an ideology for the product through these signs. An ideology is the necessary representational means through which we came to experience and make sense of reality. They provide a means of self-expression. The language of these advertisements have constructed a paradigm through capitalizing inadequacies of man.

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Villains in the Lime light: An Analysis through Alfred Hitchcock's Films

Manju P.B

Film as a performing art form has enthralled and enlightened the audience over the eons. As a global art form it has travelled all over the world within a short span appealing the masses. There are different categories of films intended to lure viewers like Family entertainments, Science fiction films, Espionage Thrillers, Crime Movies to name a few. Crime films constitute a category that encompasses a number of genres-detective movies, gangster films, cop and prison movies, court room dramas and crime stories. Crime film is an umbrella term that covers several smaller and more coherent groupings. A crime film, in the most general sense, is a film that involves various aspects of crime and the criminal justice system. Systematically it can fall under many different genres, most commonly drama films, thriller film, mystery film, action film and film noir. This paper tries to explore the mastery with which Hitchcock has delineated his villain characters who ventured to make the films a great success.

Movies have become a central dissemination of popular culture in U.S.A. Due to globalization of film markets, movies play a major role internationally in perpetuating or dispersing of images, myths and values. Par se Crime movies have become a democratic form of entertainment. Nicole Rafter in *Shots in the Mirror* defines Crime Films as “films that focus primarily on crime and its consequences” (4). Crime films reflect and shape our ideas about fundamental social, economic and political issues. A dynamic interplay of art and life can be evinced in the relationship between crime films and society. Crime movies usually portray cops, courts, prisons or crime itself. They often criticize some

aspects of society-policed brutality, prison violence, legal barriers to justice or the threat of crime. Crime movies also offer us a solace or resolution by showing a triumph over corruption and brutality-the savage cop's arrest, the admirable prisoner's escape, the lawyer's victory over legal barriers and the criminal's ultimate fall. Audience get contradictory forms of satisfaction: the reality of what we fear to be true and the fantasy of overcoming that reality: the pleasure of entering the realm of the forbidden and illicit and the security of rejecting and escaping that realm in the end. This dual movement characterized all crime films until about 1970 and continues to characterize most of them even today.

Crime films feed our insatiable hunger for stories about crime, investigations, trails and punishment. Crime films originated from the realization that deception, mayhem and underdog characters who refuse to be trampled by institutions and laws pleased audiences. Crime film plot may draw on actual historical events, reproducing celebrated cases, or even fictions-drawn on general attitudes towards crime, victims, law and punishment prevalent at the time of their making. Actor Pierce Brosnan posits that "people just love seeing other people in jeopardy" (4). This psychology is usually adapted in the making of crime films.

By mid 1950s Crime films began declining in quality and popularity. Memorable crime films are made outside US. By 1955 American society was entering a new phase different from that in which the Noir had thrived. The Civil rights movement, entrenchment of the cold war, space travel and advances in cinematic technology had redirected Hollywood towards espionage thrillers, stylized epics, romance and folly pictures, science-fictions, race-oriented dramas and so on. *The James Bond Series*, *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962), *The Sound of Music* (1965), *Pillow Talk* (1959), *The Blob* (1958), *A Raisin in the Sun* (1961) were exceptions to the rule of mid century dormancy, however, none brighter than the work of Alfred Hitchcock. British born Hitchcock (1899-1980) emerged as a leading director of America crime movies. Though Hitchcock departed from noir, he borrowed extensively from in both in style

and themes. More than most of his contemporaries, Hitchcock incorporated aberration and Freudian Psychology into his films.

A microcosm of human society can be envisaged in the films of Hitchcock where the murderous and the perilous co-exists with the homely and the domestic. Murders happen for the usual reasons-greed, ambition, jealousy, the desire to be rid of a cumbersome parent or spouse and sometimes for psychologically complex motives. "Everybody has somebody that they want to put out of the way" as Bruno says in *The Strangers on a Train* (1951). And it follows that everybody else is potentially a victim, an accomplice, an accessory after the fact, a witness or a sleuth. Hitchcock presents a world steeped in chaos. Evil comes unexpected anytime, anywhere with the typical surprise and suspense of Hitchcock.

Ross Murfin and Supriya M. Ray in *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms* define an antagonist as "the character pitted against the protagonist-the main character-of a work" (20). For them an evil or cruel antagonist is a villain. As a rule we expect such a person to be unattractive, bad mannered, short tempered etc. But Hitchcock's villains never frighten viewers because we never notice their presence. He totally deconstructed the image of the villain. Just as the criminal Charles Spencer Oakley (Joseph Cotton) in *The Shadow of a Doubt* (1943) attempting to elude the police settle down in a small town in Santa Rosa, California, the place where no one ever dreams of meeting a killer with a charming facade. Siegfried Kracauer in his article "Hollywood's Terror Films: Do They Reflect an American State of Mind?" writes that the "Frankenstein monsters of the past made us shudder at first sight, but the contemporary monster can live among us without being recognised. Evil no longer marks and defines a person's face or manner." (105)

In all Hitchcock films villains are attractive, distinguished, has good manners and very appealing. Hitchcock thinks the introduction of a villain as a real problem especially in melodrama, which is passé therefore should be up to date. Villains are always associated with evil and chaos. Hitchcock has

created all the villains according to his set rule. In *North by Northwest* (1959), Hitchcock created the villain James Mason as smooth and distinguished as he has to win the affection of Eva Marie Saint. In order to make Mason threatening Hitchcock had to split his evil character into three people: James Mason who is attractive and suave, his sinister looking secretary and the third spy, who is crude and brute. This actually posed a challenge for Hitchcock. James Mason and Cary Grant are given equal importance. Francois Truffaut regards this Hitchcock technique ingenious as it justifies the rivalry between Mason and Grant. It also adds the element of homosexual rivalry, with the male secretary clearly jealous of Eva Marie Saint.

Apart from *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943), *Psycho* (1960) is the only picture where the central figure is a villain. Hitchcock delineates the memorable villain Uncle Charlie (Joseph Cotton) in such a way that he demands public sympathy as he is never shown in the act of killing the widows. Uncle Charlie, a killer with an ideal feels that his mission is to destroy. Even though the widows might have deserved such a punishment but he was not supposed to undertake it. The film has the moral judgement that the killer is ultimately gets killed here in the form of his own niece having the same name. Hitchcock in his interview with Truffaut says that “villains are not all black and heroes are not all white; there are grays everywhere” (*Hitchcock*, 153). Even though Uncle Charlie loved his niece but not as much as she loved him yet she was forced to destroy him. Hitchcock paraphrases Oscar Wilde: “you destroy the thing you love” (153). Hitchcock also creates a *mise-en-scène* suited to the situation. The first scene itself shows the arrival of Uncle Charlie at the railway station and Hitchcock shows a heavy cloud of black smoke coming out of the engine’s smoke stack and as the train comes close, it darkens the whole station. The accompanying smoke is symbolic to suggest the arrival of devil into the town. *The Birds* (1963) also show a similar situation where Jessica Tandy in a state of shock after seeing the farmer’s body leaves the place with smoke coming out of the truck’s exhaust and the road dusty. This scene sustains the emotion and is a contrast to the peaceful mood of her arrival at the farm.

Villains are human, vulnerable, frightening and at the same time they are afraid. In the context of the film *Notorious* (1946) Truffaut observes that “villains are human and even vulnerable. They are frightening and yet we sense that they, too are afraid” (170).

Notorious, *Shadow of a Doubt*, and *Strangers on a Train* remain three great movies due to the presence of three best villains namely Claude Rains, Joseph Cotten and Robert Walker. Hitchcock’s film *Stage Fright* (1950) breaks the cardinal rule that the more successful the villain, the more successful the picture. This seems to be the great weakness of the film where Richard Todd the cowardly villain is a flop and so the film. *Rope* (1948) starring James Stewart and based on the infamous Leopold Loeb case, follows two wealthy bachelors as they plan and execute what they conceive as the “perfect” murder. One of the villains Granger is appealing in *Rope* but not in *Strangers on a Train* (1951). This seems intentional by Hitchcock as he wanted Granger to be seen as an opportunistic playboy. Bruno Anthony (Robert Walker) in *Strangers on a Train* gives us the distinct impression that Hitchcock preferred the villain. The more attractive and poetic portrayal is suggestive of Hitchcock’s adroitness in casting villains.

In *Vertigo* (1958) a thriller, Gavin Elster (Tom Helmore) who worked with Hitchcock in the film *The Ring* (1927) played a challenger to the hero Scottie (James Stewart). Gavin Elster is responsible for the whole tragedy in the life of Scottie a San Francisco detective. Scottie becomes a mere tool in the hands of the shrewd and cunning Gavin Elster, a former classmate. Gavin utilises Scottie’s vertigo problem and makes him a witness to his wife’s murder. The cast of Tom Helmore as the elegant Gavin Elster, the villain is remarkable. He is latest in the tradition of Hitchcock’s smooth, handsome villains which includes a long list: Godfrey Teacle (*The 39 Steps*), Paul Lukas (*The Lady Vanishes*), Herbert Marshall (*Foreign Correspondent*), Joseph Cotton (*Shadow of a Doubt*), Leo G Carroll (*Spellbound*), Robert Walker (*Strangers on a Train*) and Ray Miland (*Dial M for Murder*).

In *Psycho* (1960), Norman Bates (Anthony Perkins)- a charming mamma's boy like Bruno in *Strangers on a Train* is the villain without a hero to oppose him. He is a psychopath who is guided by his long dead mother is unforgettable.

The Birds (1963) on the other hand presents human beings as the unseen or hidden villain pitted against the birds. When the film opens we can see birds caged in a pet shop, restricting their movements by human beings. Mitch Brenner and Melanie Daniels the leading characters meet in a pet shop and from Melanie's gift of love birds to Mitch's younger sister Cathy starts the trouble for Melanie who gets attacked by a sea gull. A series of bird attacks accompany this event as if the birds are having a rebellion against human beings. Even the children who are innocent are not spared. After the final attack Mitch and family along with Melanie leaves the place with caged love birds and the caged birds even after the rebellion shows that humans haven't learned anything and are not ready to release the birds still. According to Donald Spoto "An avenging God may not be blamed for the chaos; it's the result of human sinfulness" (*The Art of Alfred Hitchcock*, 336)

Good family is what is required for the well being of a society and nation. All the villains are born out of a dysfunctional family. They later become a nuisance to the family, society and later the nation. Society can sometimes be responsible for creating a villain as is conveyed through *The Birds*. A strong villain is what is necessary for the success of a picture and Hitchcock has created villains that could create a lasting impression in the mind of the viewers. Even thinking about Uncle Charlie and Norman Bates chills our blood. As usual a divine intervention is there to punish the villains where the Justice system fails. The films of Hitchcock have totally revamped the concept of the villains that is why they linger in our mind even after the end of the film.

There are psychotics, criminals and even homosexuals in Hitchcock's film world who tries to dominate and attain power while oedipal complex, vertigo and cold war fears play their part. Hitchcock's villains who come

under this spell execute their power to annihilate others and often steal the show in the process.

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Loss

Kiran Jose

A lonely traveller down the road
Passing through the lovers' garden
Happy couples all around
Love's in the air, as is happiness
But the pain in his eyes
Makes him out of place
Unseen he walked down the road

The lonely traveller that's me
Walk as if in a trance
Through the lovers' garden
A sigh of pain escapes me
At the thought of my lost gem
The thought wells up my eyes
None to blame but me
My own faults estranged us
Oh! I wish, to go back and change
Mend my follies and make up to her
But alas! That's impossible
She's already someone else's
Tired of me she left
To be with someone , someone else
Who'd keep her happy
But she never knew
And would never know
The pain that I feel
The guilt that torments me and

The sleepless nights I spend cursing myself
She'd never know
How incomplete I'm without her
Taking a piece of my throbbing heart
She left me incomplete
I wish to tell my love to her
But her smiling face refrains me
The million dollar smile
The beacon of happiness and hope
Not wishing to intrude upon
Seeing her happy with that someone
I slowly walk away
Heavy steps take me away from her

Wishing to forget her
I try to walk her out of my life
But not. It's not possible
First love remains a lifetime
The thought dawns slowly
And I try to pick up my life
With a broken heart hastily mended
And still bleeding
I go about my daily life disinterested
Knowing in the depths of my heart
Life would never be the same

I continue down my lonely road
Turning back one last time
For one last look at the happy couple
To see all that I lost
I the lonely traveller go my way
Unseen and forgotten by all.

Evening Breeze

Valsa George

From where she comes, no one knows
None can see her but sense her touch
Across the bending corn, she moves
Rustling leaves fear her clutch

Swift and light, but strong and hale
She travels downhill, winding the dale
Fevered minds with her touch, she heals
Her nimble movements, everyone feels

At times she passes through the mango groves
Whistling and shaking the fruit laden boughs
As ripening fruits fall to the ground
Children joyfully rally round

Through all the land, her presence she gives
Like a flash of lightning, she quickly leaves
At times, on a steed she gallops away
Singing and musing all the way

After the Rain

Valsa George

After an hour's incessant rain
On a cloudless evening
With the face of the sky
Washed clean
Globules of water
Had speckled the oiled surface
Of the leaves of arching trees
They glistened in the evening light
Reflecting kaleidoscopic colors
As I looked on, they quivered.
Quaked and wobbled
In their effort to balance precariously,
Each flopped down one by one
With a sad refrain
Flip... plop, flip ...plop
Leaving ripples in the puddle below

In the hush of Nature
On this quiet twilight evening
Their distinct tinkling
Was music to my ears!

A Rag Picker

Valsa George

Sometime in the night, it had rained
The sky got its face washed clean
By the night's unanticipated showers
And the grime washed off the Earth's mien

The dawn is breaking
Night lights still glimmer here and there
The sky remains calm and cloudless
And cool is the mildly blowing air

The sleeping town is waking up
At this transitional point
I look out into the street
To see a sight that shall never disappoint

Along the road moves an old man
His snow white hair left unkempt
With a hunch back and drooping shoulders
The visible marks of the hard years spent

Age has drained his life sap away

~~Yet he moves with firm resolve not to beg~~

His frail body supported on a stick
Used as a veritable third leg
With his staff, he perseveringly stirs
Every heap of rubbish
On either side of the road
For little trinkets hidden among the trash

A rag picker with a sack on his back
Picking up today's treasure
From yesterday's trash
For him, things priceless beyond measure

With complaints none
He faces life and its trials
Never losing the glitter in his eyes
Though a loner in life's dark isles

I ask myself, why every day
I religiously look for this man who limps along
And I get a quick answer
'He helps you turn your sobs into a song'

He is Young

Jose K. J. Kollamaparampil

'Mum and Dad are in the heavens'
Tells he, when asked about.
What do you want for dinner ?
'Pork, pork', pat comes the reply.
For dinner? 'fish and chips'.
Yet he likes to eat everything.

In the mornings, he wants
'A hot shower'. But at times.
'I don't want a shower;'
Insistence makes him cry.
But an offer of a ride in van
Quickens him to shower fast.

In his seventy third year,
He is blind and stout,
Handsome enough to be viewed
But no fair sex shall want him
For he can take no mental challenges,
No thoughts fly beyond a circle.

Millions can overpower his brain
But few can excel his heart.

*Young is his surname

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