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Time and Narrative in Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi* (1982)

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Abstract

This study sets out to analyse the notions of 'time' and 'narrative' in Richard Attenborough's Gandhi (1982), in particular it attempts to find out the relation between them in a film narrative. This study seeks to explain issues such as, what effect does deliberate violation of historical order of events achieve in a (film) narrative? What factors influence the 'author' to make choices in terms of duration of an event?, Does the 'frequency' help readers or audience decode the narrative 'motif'? Does the titular repetition address the issue of appreciating the 'motif'?

Keywords: narratology, time, duration, order, narrative repetition

Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi* (1982), as a historical narrative, appears to have employed a linear temporal structure. However, he makes use of analepsis and prolepsis with ideological commitments to fulfill. As a retelling by a British director, it is likely to be pregnant with ideological projection of the 'author.' Therefore, this study is an attempt to analyse the relationships between time and the thematic and ideological elements of narrative. More specifically, the study investigates how time as a device can manipulate and aid infuse ideology in the film narrative. The focus of the study stems from the idea that when the postcolonial subject is the 'subject' of the narrative, the ideological infusion is imperative. The hypothesis that follows is that analysing the fundamental aspects of time proposed by Genette namely, 'order, 'duration,' and 'frequency' and Ricoeur's 'within-time-ness' will reveal the ideological 'plot' behind the narrative and events are fueled to arrive at the designed destination under the disguise of historical 'retelling.' Having stated the statement of the issue, in the following I explain briefly the rationale for choosing *Gandhi* and analyzing the ideological commitment of the 'author' in the narrative.

First, the analysis of *Gandhi* is driven by the fact it is a narrative about a historical figure which unfolds a history of independence of the Indian subcontinent. Unlike fiction, the construction of history is the reconstruction of the past. The historical narrator (author) volunteers to remember and recalls the pastness of the past. This reenactment as the act of rethinking not reliving the past is a reality of the past. As history is primarily the study of the past time, the study of past which the film unfolds is quite necessary and appropriate. Second, Herman (2013) defines ideology as "the frame of values informing the narrative." The underlying ideological postulation is that the man who had led the nation into freedom had no

freedom to live in a 'free' India. The study arrives at this hypothesis while historically evaluating the postcolonial 'constructs' such as history, civilization, and the British rule. History of Indian subcontinent, dating back to 7000 BC, has been written by Friedrich Max Müller, a British agent who projected that Vedic corpus was the foundation of Hindu civilization. Along with the idea of birth of civilization, the birth of nationalism was 'perpetuated' by a British writer, James Mill in his *The History of British India* (1818). He periodizes Indian history into Hindu civilization, Muslim civilization and the British Raj, from which was born the theory of two nation-state i.e. Hindu vs Muslim. This communal ideology presented to Indians in the initial scale helped to establish a sense of nationalism or anti-colonial Indian nationalism. It was later manipulated into believing that a new identity of two separate civilizations i.e. Hindu vs Muslim should be formulated. This notion of nationhood peppered with the idea of Communalism was perpetuated and supported by the colonial power in full scale. This 'ideology' was appealing to these two hostile communities. The result was the formation of two opposing movements i.e. 'Hindu Mahasabha' and 'Muslim League.' The rest is the history of so called non-violent independence from the British and its aftermath-t he bloodiest, horrendous post-independent events in its entire history. This is precisely the film narrative's sole 'motif' that it captures and presents to the global audience under the pretext of the life-story of non-violent *mahatma* Gandhi. In the following section, this inquiry is triggered by the above hypothetical statement to investigate whether or not the narrative is impregnate with such ideological make-up.

In this study, as stated earlier, I will begin defining different levels of narrative's temporal structure, along with an in-depth study on events or episodes against Attenborough's temporal 'device.'

Genette categorizes time framework into three sections: order, duration and frequency. First, order is the arrangements of sequencing of events in the story and the arrangement in the narrative. It can be chronological- where one can narrate events as they occurred. Folk tales in common are narrated in the order of 'real' events, for instance, in Valmiki's *Ramayana*. Second, non-chronological- one can recount events out of order. The western literatures right from Homeric epic prefer to "use the beginning *in medias res*," (Genette, 182) and have flashbacks to fill the 'gaps.' One can easily notice film's 'temporal narrative mode' and its motif right from the first movements in *Gandhi*. The film begins with a statement about its *subject*,

> No man's life can be encompassed in *one telling* (emphasis mine). There is no way to give each year its allotted weight, to include each event, each person who helped to shape a life time. What can be done is to be faithful in spirit to the record and try to find one's way to the heart of man…. (Attenborough, 1982).

It is a self-declaration that the narrative is a faithful record of finding out the 'heart of man' and his 'intention' for his nation. But in the end it belies its claims. Let me explain the 'heart' of the narrative. The story-line begins in the fine evening on 30 January, 1948. The first episodic event unfolds in the narrative 'order' is the assassination of Gandhi. The camera rolls on in the square at the Birla's House, where the 'epic' hero in his usual gait was introduced to the audience. Alongside, the 'sole' Machiavellian, a Hindu fanatic Nathuram Godse appears on screen at 1:32 seconds on film-timeline, approaching Gandhi and wishing him 'namaste.' The killing takes place at 4:12. In the narrational flow, the first event in the organization of the narrative is the last moment in the story of life of hero-Gandhi. Then the temporal sequence continues. It is his funeral historically reported to have been attended by one-million people lined up for five-miles on the banks of Jamuna river which was a real footage in the narrative. The third event is a flashback, going back to 55 years, where Gandhi travels around South Africa in a train. The event becomes dramatic, when we see him thrown out the coach in a railway station, since he was traveling in the first class coach meant only for the whites. The fourth episodic event is where he was found interrogating with his fellow Indians and the British colleagues that it was not fair not to be permitted to travel in a first class or walk on the pavements as citizens of the Empire.

Gandhi begins with a crisscrossing, where the *order* of narrated events (NE) differs from the order of historical events (HE). Thus the relationship between the time of events and the time of narrative could be figured as N(arrative)E 1= H(istorical)E (last day); NE2 =HE(funeral); NE3:HE(middle life1); NE4 =HE (m2).

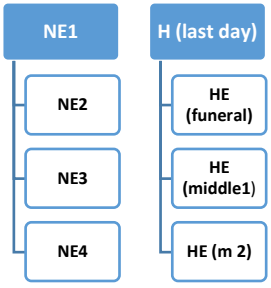

Figure 1 The *order* of appearance of narrative events and historical events

What we find here is narratology approves of 'diegetic' or film-time ordering that is independent of real time order, resulting in an independent time-ordering. The question we should raise here: Why is this deliberate violation of historical order of events in film narrative? I will respond to this as I summarize the motive behind 'narrative motif' later.

After the introductory events, the sequence weaves backward with analepsis and ellipses, laying foundation for the story to come alive. Thus a fusion of time is built into the film from the very beginning: chronological time, or time pertaining to the diegesis, which operates syntagmatically, and achronological time, which operates paradigmatically. In the first event where Gandhi is assassinated followed by his funeral establishes chronological time which in historical time had happened on 30 January 1948. And then the temporal order changes, dating back to his life span around 1898 in South Africa. There is a spacio-temporal shift in the narrative. Here it suffices to note that thus a consciousness of the weight of the past has been thrown onto the present. The story has to continue with the chronological sequence in order to arrive at this conclusion through a sequential plot. As Paul Ricoeur defines, plot is the "intelligible whole that governs a succession of events in any story" (Ricoeur, 1984:174). As such the plot is characterized by temporal complexity. Thus plot becomes the crossing point joining temporality and narrativity. A story is made of events to the extent that plot makes events in any story. Ricoeur states, "to tell and follow a story is already to reflect upon events in order to encompass them in successive wholes" (p. 174). The question here is, what sort of 'whole' is the narrative *Gandhi* aimed at? As it is clear, there is only one 'whole' aiming at the culmination to the 'event'- assassination, unfolding more than fifty-eight narrative episodes summarizing the life span from 1893 to 1948 in 3:14:00 minutes.

Another temporality, where author's ideology can possibly be seen is the *duration* allotted for the episodic events. Genette defines 'duration' as "number of pages per duration of event" (Genette, 1983:186). For a film narrative, I define it as number of seconds or minutes per duration of event. It helps assess the effect of narrational flow, such as acceleration, deceleration, stasis, and ellipsis. We know that the relation between the occurrence of narrated events and the real events is a complex issue. A narrative unit set in a literary text cannot "really be said to possess a definite duration" (186), as duration varies from reader to reader while reading. Whereas it is quite different in the case of film narrative. Let me elaborate the different elements of 'duration.' According to Genette, the combination of historical and narrative *duration* can be achieved through the following fundamental forms: *summary*, dramatic *scene*, narrative *stasis* and *ellipsis*. *Summary* means the narrative duration is less compared to historical duration, and events are reduced to the main linking events or episodes……. i.e (NE< HE). It can be of variable length. By summarizing some events, acceleration is geared up. In *Gandhi*, almost all the episodic events are summarized into compact duration. It really accelerates the tragic hero's life events. Second, dramatic scene means, "the scene where the narrative and historical time are supposed to be the nearly

equal" (188). Narrative time is more or less equal to the historical event i.e (NE=HE). Conversations and significant events are usual examples. The purpose of 'scene' is for deceleration. In the film narrative, the assassination of Gandhi is narrated more or less in the same duration of the historical event. Again, Gandhi's experience of racism, where he was pushed out of the train in an unknown railway station is a classic example for dramatic scene. Here the duration of both narrative and historical (NE and HE) events is likely to match. Third, narrative *stasis*, where the narrative duration is more than the historical event in order to provide more description of what is happening i.e. (NE=n, HE=0). The historical event is interrupted to make room exclusively for narratorial discourse. Static descriptions fall into this category. The second narrative event is his funeral, where BBC announces the death of Gandhi as,

> the object of this massive tribute is ..to a private man without wealth, without property, without official title, or office. Mahatma Gandhi is not the Commander of Armies nor a ruler of a vast land; he could not boast any scientific achievements or artistic gifts, yet men, governments, dignitaries from all over the world have joined hands today to pay homage to this little brown man in the loin cloth who has led this country to freedom (*Gandhi,* 1982).

Such a long announcement interrupts the narrative flow, but adds gravity to the event. Fourth, e*llipsis,* "consist(s) of a certain amount of historical time covered in a zero amount of narrative" (188). In other words, the narrative zips absolutely some part of the historical event i.e. (NE=0, HE=n). The narrative duration is greatly reduced, compared to the historical duration, absorbing a large amount of historical time in the process of *ellipsing.* Ellipsis is a quite common form of duration in *Gandhi*.

As we counted the *order* of recounted events earlier, here I will calculate the narrational flow based on the quantity of *duration* assigned for the narrated event and supposedly the time duration of the historical event. The opening scene (event) happens on a single day, at 5:17 pm on January, 30 1948. On screen, the duration allotted for event was between 1:32 and 4:12 seconds, unfolding the tragic moment in the life of hero. The next event, funeral procession for Gandhi was shown for 2:30 sec, despite the fact that the duration in real time must have been not less than a few hours. The next episodic event was in South Africa where the hero experiences humiliation through discrimination first time. This dramatic event is presented for about 2:45 sec. The fourth event happens on screen for 1:40 sec., followed by Indian congress party in South Africa where he was burning the passes asking for equal citizenship rights of the Empire- up to 15:50.

What can we understand from this inventory? First, there is an extensive shift in relative duration. For instance a few minutes for longer events in history and longer scene for

relatively a shorter event. Second, the 'duration' allotted for the episodic events in South Africa shown in the film is about 30:44 sec in the place for narrating the life time duration' lasting for from 1893 to 1915. The twenty-two year history events are narrated in little more than a half-an-hour in the narrative. The historical time has been successfully elapsed due to the reason that the narrative episodes were short and focused. As a result there are many ellipses in the so called episode in South Africa. This is called "increasing discontinuity of the narrative" (Genette, 1983: 187). This discontinuity is very obvious in the 'first part' of the film. The event where Gandhi was shown first time in loin cloth is when John met him in prison. Historically he had taken a vow not to adore him with western or Indian aristocratic attire when he happened to witness destitution where women did not afford to have upper garments on 21.09.1921 in Madurai (*my city*). The plight of Indians under the British Raj was tactfully ellipsed in the narrative. In the following, let me elaborate the analysis of 'duration' further.

Narratorial duration can be used in varying degree. For instance, a 'scene' can be combined with 'summary.' Jawaharlal's conversational engagement with Gandhi, requesting him to end his days-long fast is the 'summary' of his fasting enterprise. Duration allotted to narrative events reveals the significance attested to the event - more number of pages (print) or minutes (film), more importance assigned. The longest event is the historic 240-mile salt march on the western coast up to Dandi is shown from 2:04:30 to 2:12:12 (7 min.: 42 sec.). The longest duration allotted to the *event* reveals the relative significance assigned namely, that his deterministic endeavor of gathering mass through relentless act is the hall mark of his personality and patriotism. The second longest event is the very first public demonstration, where he was burning the passes asking for equal citizen of the Empire from 08:16 upto 15:50 (7 min.:34 sec.), showcases and summarizes the personhood of Gandhi, preparing the audience to believing that public demonstration through *ahimsa* (non-violence) is in his vein with which he is going to secure, otherwise unimaginable, freedom to his mother land. In the line, events such as, 'his visit to the poorest farmer's house and subsequent arrest' are running for more than five minutes, proclaiming that he is committed to his countrymen. A host of events such as arriving in Indian attire; his *discovery* of India; being introduced at the National Congress party; Jallianwala Bagh massacre (killing 1516 with 1560 bullets); fasting unto death at Calcutta are all the evidential events to project Gandhi as the emerging sole *maha-athma* (great-soul) who does not deserve the kind of end meted out to him. In other words, the choice of events from the historical account and the narrative duration allotted to each of them heightens the emotional appeal locally and globally –one of author's intentions.

While addressing the issue of narrative time in appreciating the 'motif' of work, one has to take into account of the narrative *repetition*. I will discuss the third narrative temporality –*frequency*. Genette defines it as "the relative frequency of the narrated events and of the narrative sections that report them" (189). The quite common form of narration is narrating an event that occurs once. He calls this "singulative narrative" (*recit singulatif).* In other words, narrating once what happened once (NE_1/ HE_1) or relating *n* times what happened *n* times (NE_n / HE_n). The film is saturated with *recit singulatif*, such as Gandhi experiencing racism first time, being bullied by the white teenagers in South Africa, arriving at Bombay (India), 'discovering' India, Jallianwala Bagh massacre, inauguration of Swadeshi movement, historic Salt march, leaving for the round table conference, Jinnah's partition proposal.

A narrative can also tell several times, with or without variations, an event that happened only once. He calls it *repetitive narrative,* where "the story repetitions exceed in number the repetitions of events" (Genette, 1983: 189). In other words, recounting more than once what happened once (NE_n / HE_1). The most significant repetitive event in the narrative is the opening scene where Gandhi is shot with a single shot, followed by the funeral sequence. Why did the 'author' choose to repeat 'killing' event as the dominant repetition? forms the basis for this enquiry. Another recurrent image - the *chakra* (the spinning wheel) has been shown repetitively throughout the narrative. Gandhi is often found to be spinning his own *khadi* (the homespun cloth). The charkha was the physical embodiment and symbol of Gandhian Economics –*Swadeshi* (self-sufficiency). It embodies the dignity of labor, equality, unity, as all Gandhian volunteers were to spin each day as British control of India was rooted in control of indigenous industries such as textiles. The 'projection' in a subtle sense is that Gandhi's *chakra* brought India freedom.

Narrative repetition not only helps to intensify the shock of the plot as in the case of the first scene, but also works paradigmatically, cutting vertically through the syntagmatic linear act of watching. The repeated noise of shooting echoes loudly throughout the narrative. It becomes inevitably linked with other scenes of violence, notably, the killings of women and children in two opposite partition camps in the post-independent context. Gandhi said in the film: "An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind." Gandhi being arrested and jailed was narrated once, whereas historically he was imprisoned for ten times. The 'projection' here is that Gandhi was not at all threatened and silenced by the British for his 'lead' in the freedom struggle. Genette labels it as, *iterative narrative* - "in which a single narrative assertion covers several recurrences of the same event or, to be more precise, of several analogical events considered only with respect to what they have in common, it is

called *iterative narrative* (*recit iteratif*)" (Genette, 1983: 189). In other words, relating one time what happened several times (NE_1 / HE_n).

Whether a historical event is narrated in the same *order*, with the same *duration* as happened historically and with the same *frequency and* as *singulative* narrative or the *iterative* narrative, this is absolutely impossible that events can be narrated with temporal accuracy. This is the beauty of reality by arresting the beauty of the presence of the present in artistic expression. Narrative art has the ability to replicate the historical moment since in reality no reality repeats in itself. It is due to the fact that any historical event becomes historical because of temporality or historicality as Ricoeur calls it, and no event gets repeated in the history of events. But on the contrary the narrative event can repeat the same historic event any number of times in narrativity. Then, why can then events alone be repeated in narratives? Might be due to the fact that the paradox of the triplicate presence of 'present' in the history of events, that is to say, the present in the past, present in the present, and present in the future. The idea here is when the present becomes a reality in history, there is no way an event becomes past. In other words every event is present historically, it becomes past only in the presence of the present. Even then the presence of the present cannot report the present of the past for it is a future event. While anticipating a future event, it denotes that there is an element of present involved, so the future event happens; automatically it becomes present that it would become a past in the future as well. Events are fluid as moves across diachronically. When such complexity is present in the historicality, the articulation of narrative events messes itself with imperfection, as it is able to see that the perfect *time* is impossible. The question that follows the understanding of complexity of narrating event, Can we claim that there is a relational representation of historical and narrative events in *Gandhi*? The only one illustration possible is the assassination of Gandhi. As a historical event, it is fluid as it is embedded within the cosmological time frame, whereas the narrated event which happened in the past is narrated in the presence of the present: it stays forever. This film narrative employs this "in" time narrative technique at 'dramatic scene(s), which becomes an evidential event to reveal the ideological undercurrent.

Narrowing down to a conclusion, I recall what Ricoeur states that a narrative conclusion is the pole of attraction of the entire development, neither to be deducted nor predicted. Rather than predictable, a conclusion must be acceptable, "looking back from the conclusion to the episode leading up to it, we have to be able say that ending required these sorts of events, and this chain of actions' (Ricoeur, 1984: 170). In Gandhi, the end, predictably enough, is a chronological linear sequence ending with temporal sequence. It is

the true ending with a classic narrative closure. The story does not end *in medias res*, leaving in suspense any narrative possibilities as the killer is noticeably seen aby the audience, requires no participation to give a final shape. Ricoeur's definition of predictable conclusion is reached as the audiences are left with the nothing to define or predict. The presence of narrative closure to the story narrated in chronological time helps audience to arrive at meanings, dimensions and histories.

Why does the director choose a 'linear-time structure? He chose this particular temporal mode because his narrative 'subject' is the life story of the most influential person in the history of India and most importantly the worst assassination history of the world. From this perspective, my argument takes a reversal that there is no ending, in as much as there is no classic narrative closure. The absence of narrative closure, meaning the death of Gandhi, though appears to be an end, is the beginning of the story of 'independent nations.' It calls for the reason why Gandhi was killed and demands the audience attention and compels them to create meanings. Thus the audience's critical sense is awakened, leading to this question. This brings us to basic reason for a linear –time structure. Attenborough chose this temporal time mode because he is going to leave with the audience to deconstruct. It is the audience who have to use a kaleidoscope to piece together the events culmination to the 'dramatic scene' in order to arrive at some sort of 'whole' in the plot. This act of deconstruction blurs the boundary line between the director and the audience. Through this act of deconstruction, 'reading' becomes an act of construction as the audience 'writes' the film narrative through the prism of their imaginative understanding of narrative and time. That's why, the story simply stops being narrated, *in medias res*, leaving in suspense multiple narrative possibilities, requiring audience participation to arrive at a possible closure. We have no way of knowing what would finally happen to these two nations- India and Pakistan after partition. I arrive at this open-ended closure, simply because it ends with where it began. In fact, Attenborough's intention might not to *tell* a story of colonial India, but he is using 'Gandhi's' story. Ricoeur's definition of a predictable conclusion is reversed, as the ending is simply left to the audience to define or predict -what would be the 'story' of Indian subcontinent without 'Gandhi' and the Empire'? The ultimate projection is to show that the hostility between these two nations will see no end as the Father of nation has been put to eternal rest. What is in store is unrest and chaos. On the contrary, the British were projected as peacekeepers between the two permanently hostile, aggressive nations, constantly fighting at each other. This notion has been highlighted showing violent scenes frequently for long 'duration.'

While commenting on the role of narrator, the narrative voice in Genette' term *heterodiegetic* is employed where the narrator is absent from the story he tells. A structuring of narrative time that highlights certain events so as to imply a chain of narrative causality known to the storyteller but as yet unknown to the listener or reader—will serve as a continuous reminder that the story is already being grasped as a whole: e.g. the opening scene in *Gandhi*. The choice of detached third person narrator is deliberate in order to avoid unnecessary comments on the life and events of the 'hero.' Attenborough has chosen this kind of narrative time-frame which helps him not to shift perspectives and temporal levels. This temporality does not create any barrier between the character(s) and events in the narrative and the audience. A linear structure without changing the narrative voice, thus giving audience access to the minds of the characters is a technique that seems to be simple, but helps audience to feel the weight of the past or each event, culminating onto the climax or the dramatic scene –the assassination of Gandhiji. Thus, this episode becomes the striking point in the 'whole' of narrative that an act of violence is a death knoll for non-violence. It is the narrative thread which weaves the entire episodic narration. It leaves unsaid that violence begets violence. Gandhi grating approval for the separation of Indian 'subcontinent' into different nations infuriates the Hindutva members of the Congress and the consequence is the demise of non-violence itself- the killing of Gandhi. The narrative pleads for a signification that Gandhi was shot dead not by the British, but by an Indian.

As a postcolonial subject-audience, I am convinced of the fact that the nine Oscar-winning *Gandhi* film narrative is no exception or surprise in painting what the juries of Oscar and the audience from the other side of global North could have wanted Indian subcontinent to be seen after the 'demise' of both the Father of nation and the British Empire: it's a timely 'project.'

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Wisdom of Understanding, Respecting and Developing an Affinity with Nature: A Native American Ecological Perspective

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Abstract

Indigenous people are known for their knowledge of nature and its subtle ecosystem. They have acquired this ability to understand the environment and its changes through worship and submission that is the fundamental principle of their survival. Whereas, environmental education including teaching, research, and practice now-a-days have been reported by the traditions of western and Euro-centric culture. In this context, indigenous perspective of environment is totally neglected, marginalized because it is alleged to be unscientific and impractical. In fact, to greater extent Euro- centric methods, approaches and attitude towards nature are very often proved malicious and destructive. Their attempts to safeguard environment have resulted to be futile because they could not understand the relation between man and nature. Their quest for control and superiority over nature created numerous problems through-out the world. Unlike modern man, aboriginal people of America managed to cultivate a balanced life style without disturbing the susceptible ecosystem. This led them to be happy and prosperous for ages with the abundant resources of nature. Indigenous have always lived on the best of terms with the natural world but on the other hand the western European civilizations have always been at odds with nature. In this context, there is a significant mounting body of literature exploring the aboriginal environmental philosophy that can provide solutions to the present environmental issues. The present paper examines the behaviour of Natives towards ecosystem in general and American Indians in Particular. It also emphasizes on the ways and means that can be drawn from life experiences of First Nations to restore sustainable ecosystem.

Key Words: Indigenous, ecosystem, Euro-centric, marginalized, aboriginal etc.

Indigenous people usually have a lot of knowledge about nature and its subtle ecosystem. They in-fact acquired the ability to understand the environment and its changes through worship, respect and submission, which is a fundamental principle of their life and survival. Their influence can be clearly felt even now as today's environmental education teaching, research, and practice have been reported by the traditions of western and Euro-centric culture. In the same context, it is observed that indigenous perspective of environment is totally neglected and marginalized. It is alleged to be unscientific and impracticable. In-fact to a greater extent, Euro- centric methods, approaches and attitude towards nature are very often proved malicious and destructive. Their attempts to safeguard the environment have resulted to be futile because they could not understand the relation between man and nature.

Their quest for control and superiority over nature created numerous problems throughout the world.

Unlike the modern man, aboriginal people of America managed to cultivate a balanced life style without disturbing the susceptible ecosystem. This led them to be happy and prosperous for ages with the abundant resources of nature. In the same context the famous novelist N.Scott Momaday's novel "House Made of Dawn" was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1969, and is considered the first major work of the Native American Renaissance. Momaday observed that the "Indian has always lived on the best of terms with the natural world. Western man and western European civilization has always been at odds with nature" Momaday further argued that, "through an exchange of ideas, both cultures could achieve their final goal of a sustainable Earth. There is a significant mounting body of literature exploring aboriginal environmental philosophy that can provide solutions to the present environmental issues. Modern man is responsible for today's world's problems like global warming, ozone layer depletion, deforestation ecological imbalance and loss of biodiversity." (Costo,4-5). This created various problems to everyone irrespective of the nation that they belong to. The natives actually contributed much to the world, but they are not properly recognized. For them relation with the land was not only physical but also biological, emotional and spiritual. In fact, they were truly the models of ecological sustainability. Reverence and passion for thousands of years towards the earth and its web of life was the primary focus and way of life for them. This was actually a direct result of their values and worldviews.

In the same context Roderick Frazier Nash, regarded as a national leader in the field of environmental history and management and environmental education, writes, "Native Americans can be regarded as the first American environmentalists by their practices that illustrated their understanding of nature as a community to which humans as well as every other thing belong. The Native Americans undoubtedly used the earth's resources but they respected the limits of the environment and understood the need to restrain human impact. Most Native American religions and ethical systems was the idea that humans and other forms of life constituted a single society". (Nash,1989).On the other-hand the Western thinkers and scientists generally have a tendency to find solutions to the present ecological crisis only with the help of science. They usually do not consider the past as an important source being informative and enlightening. Neither do they consider the traditional cultures of Original Peoples as holding meaningful answers for the world community. In-fact for the Western European peoples, the knowledge system of Original Nations is not standard and practicable. As a result this misconception has pushed the world into severe problems without reasonable answers.

Problems such as man's alienation, detachment from nature and rude treatment of environment have resulted in alarming living conditions worldwide. In-fact, solutions for environmental issues cannot be found in modern science or technology because the development of science and technology is partially responsible for the problem. People for their temporary pleasures and needs started exploiting and disturbing the nature indiscriminately for centuries. Native people on the other hand led their lives for many centuries by being a part of the nature, adjusting themselves according to it and adapting to the changing climatic conditions. However, modern man has failed to understand the power and response of environment and begun to play with it senselessly by ignoring the implications of the act. Further all the nations are worrying a lot about degradation of environment and the problem is on par with other major problems such as illiteracy, unemployment and poverty.

As a result, United Nations Organisation and other international voluntary organisations are sensitising people to the dangers that are threatening the environment. However, now that ecological limits of the Earth are being reached, and the future supply of fresh water, air on the planet and the health of the oceans are being seriously called into question. Moreover some Western thinkers are finally coming to the realization that the Earth and its ecosystems have biological limits, and there are severe consequences when humans arrogantly refuse to maintain ecological balances and safeguard the waters of life. Actually original Nations' knowledge systems were grounded and continue to be ashore for thousands of years of multi-generational and interactive understanding of the biological processes of Life.

In-fact when the early Europeans travelled for the first time across Native lands in North America, they did not find the ecosystems devastated by Native cultural practices. The Explorers, chroniclers, surveyors, and missionaries described the vast majority of the Indian lands as virtual "Edens" with wonderful profusion. Yet the same time our ancestors who worked with the natural life systems to build such places were not and are still not credited for their amazing ecological accomplishments. They for that matter are not acknowledged at all. In-fact, the environmental wisdom and spirituality of North American Indians was really great. Animals at that time were respected as equal in rights to humans. Of course, they were hunted, but only for food, and the hunter first asked permission of the animal's spirit. Among the hunter-gatherers the land was owned in common and there was no concept of private property in land. The idea that land could be bought and sold was disgusting. Many Indians had an appreciation and affection of nature's beauty.

Though religious beliefs varied between tribes, there was a common widespread belief in a Great Spirit who created the earth and pervaded everything. The Indians viewed the

white man's attitude to nature as completely opposite of theirs. The white man seemed determined on destroying whole natural order, felling forests, clearing land, mining for minerals, killing animals for sport. In other words, the Indians were not an alien race of impossibly wonderful people. They were human just like the rest of us. It is aptly said that wisdom derives from way of life, and is as fragile as nature. In the process many Indians shared their animism, their respect for nature and their attitude to the land with other hunter-gatherers. But when the ways of life change, beliefs too change to support them.

After that the advent of agriculture and then industry brought massive shifts in attitudes to nature. Our present way of life is laying waste to the environment that supports us. Rather new beliefs can actually help us change our way of life, and arrive at those beliefs where one can learn immensely from the North American Indians. Perhaps the most famous of all Indian speeches about the environment is the wonderful speech of Chief Seattle of the Squamish tribe of Northwest USA (1854). He rather asks beautifully by addressing a white man in the following manner, "How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water, how can you buy them? Every part of the Earth is sacred to my people. Every shining pine needle, every sandy shore, every mist in the dark woods, every clear and humming insect is holy in the memory and experience of my people. The sap which courses through the trees carries the memory and experience of my people. The sap which courses through the trees carries the memories of the red man. You must teach your children that the ground beneath their feet is the ashes of our grandfathers. So that they will respect the land, tell your children that the Earth is rich with the lives of our kin. Teach your children what we have taught our children that the Earth is our mother. Whatever befalls the Earth befalls the sons of the Earth. If men spit upon the ground, they spit upon themselves." It is still a brilliant piece of work that distils the essence of many scattered Indian speeches. It is a moving lament on the passing of the Indian, but with only a fraction of the ecological awareness. They have stronger attachment with the land they live in. The soil is always soothing, strengthening, cleansing and healing. That is why the old Indian still sits upon the earth instead of propping himself up and away from its life-giving forces. For him, to sit or lie on the ground is to be able to think more deeply and to feel more keenly. This way he can see more clearly into the mysteries of life and come closer in kinship to other lives about him. In addition to it native people believe that kinship with all creatures of the earth is an essential principle of life.

Natives knew that man's heart away from nature becomes hard; he knew that lack of respect for growing, living things soon leads to lack of respect for humans, too. So, he kept his youth close to its softening influence. They believe that men must be born and reborn to continue their sense of belonging. Their bodies must be formed of the dust of their

forefathers' bones. An Indian similarly remains kin to all living things and he gives equal rights to all the creatures around him. Everything belonging to the earth is loved and revered. In contrast to him, the Modern man on the other hand considered animal life just as a tool for food and pleasure. In the same context Luther Standing Bear goes on to describe "Forests were mown down, the buffalo exterminated, the beaver driven to extinction and his wonderfully constructed dams dynamited … and the very birds of the air silenced … The white man has come to be the symbol of extinction for all things natural in this continent. Between him and the animal there is no rapport and they have learned to flee from his approach, for they cannot live on the same ground". He also remarked, many non-Native Americans don't understand the deep attachments of Native people to the land and how forcible removal of Native lands from them by the European settlers challenged their cultural identities.

All humans have a basic urge to claim the land, bodies of water and other resources needed to produce the food and shelter required by their families and communities. Europeans and most Asian immigrants came to the Western Hemisphere believing that they would have opportunities to purchase and own the resources needed to produce food and fibre, as ownership had become the accepted practice in their own countries. With most of the land in Europe and Asia owned by the princes, rulers, religious institutions, and the wealthy, America offered possibilities for land ownership to the new immigrants. By then the Native Americans had no concept of ownership. Land, water and other resources of the earth were still considered as divine gifts to be shared without ownership and conserved respectfully. They believed that all forms of life come from the Mother Earth. Land and its gifts of bison, fish, corn and vegetables are supposed to be very sacred for them. Sharing Mother Earth's gifts is considered an essential part of spirituality in their cultures.

When Europeans and other immigrants took control over tribal hunting and fishing territories, the Native Americans naturally felt that the Mother Earth was being dishonoured. Forcible removal of their ancestral lands and confinement to reservations totally violated the Native Americans' agrarian imperative. As a result, it is not surprising that such devastating violations of what was most important to them led to profound disillusionment and cultural depression among themselves. As they already had the survival capacity in a less complicated world, their approach to living sustained the environment for future generations and had an inherent fairness doctrine. The construct of the **agrarian imperative** helps us identify the factor devised by the earlier indigenous Americans to appreciate its contributions to humankind. They had actually figured out a method of democratically sharing Earth's gifts. As the American Indians survived for many centuries while inhabiting in this hemisphere, they altered their environment very little. While they thrived, they developed various methods

of recording information, systematic methods of observation and experimentation that resulted in sustainable agriculture techniques, astronomy and engineering. Their methods of living nurtured cities of approximately 30,000 to 40,000 inhabitants until the new immigrants arrived with unfamiliar diseases to which Natives had little resistance.

As the pace of ecological change increases, so too does the need for baseline information with which to direct conservation and restoration activities. Often, however, the data are scarce. Thus local knowledge becomes the richest source when it has accumulated over generations, embedding observations and corresponding cultural adaptations within a context of long-term ecological change. In fact most of the Western ecologists are unfamiliar with many ways in which renewed interest in Traditional Ecological Knowledge is adding to the common store of knowledge about existing ecosystems and its relevance to ecological restoration and conservation. According to Alison Stormwolf and Pat Wilson, Native American wisdom is deep, insightful, simple and true. It has passed the test of time. The wisdom of their elders is very pertinent to the times in which we are living. Had the rest of the world lived according to their philosophy as 'Earth Keepers', we as a planet would not have faced the dreadful problems that attack in the ways of pollution, climate change and plundering of resources. In-fact there is countless tribes, each with his own language, sacred stories, customs and ceremonies. However, they all share the wisdom of being aware of the cosmic connections not only with each other but also with the very earth and sky, trees, rocks, animals and plants.

The above paragraph evaluates Natives' philosophy of life that incorporates values and ethics in binding them with nature. Thus environmental ethics have existed in the US even much before the European settlement by beginning with the native cultural beliefs and traditions. The modern environmental ethics consists of views correlating with the modern conservation movement in the US. The ancient vision of the fourth world people has the resonance to deal with every contemporary ecological problem. The only thing required is to explore and decode the belief systems and ways of life. Finally, when we think of answers and solutions to our environmental issues such as loss of biodiversity and global warming, it is important to respect, recognise and apply traditional ecological wisdom of the Fourth world people. It will certainly help us enrich our lives and communicating knowledge to achieve a better and sustainable relationship with the environment. After all we need to collaborate with environment to change the world for the better by revisiting our relationship with nature.

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Migration, Memory and an Endless Longing: The Poetry of Migrant Kashmiri Pandits

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Abstract

The Hindus of the Muslim majority valley of Kashmir are commonly referred to as Pandits and form its prominent minority community. As a result of the rise of insurgency against the Indian rule in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Pandits faced very troublesome circumstances in which their members were targeted by the Kashmiri militants on the suspicion of being informers. Threats were also issued to the Pandits because of their

assumed loyalty towards India. In such circumstances of fear and insecurity which sneaked into their psyche, the Pandit community embarked on an exodus from their motherland. Having been in exile for more than two decades now, many Pandits are taking to poetry and other forms of art to express their profound angst on their life as migrants and a gradual loss of their roots and identity. This poetry is written in many languages like Kashmiri, Hindi, Urdu, and English. However, this paper will focus on the English poetry of some of these migrant Pandits. In their newly found poetic voices, the Pandit artists can be seen yearning for their loss home or paradise while also lamenting on the suffering that the differential experience of exodus has brought for their lives. This paper aims to visit the poetry of some of these poets in how it engages with a variety of experiences that have emanated from the exodus of Pandits and their subsequent life of being migrants.

Keywords: Kashmiri Pandits, Migration, Memory, Longing, Militancy, Exile, Poetry.

Kashmiri Hindus are generally known as Pandits and constitute the prominent minority group in an otherwise largely Muslim majority Kashmir valley. As a result of the rise of militancy against the Indian rule in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Pandits faced a very precarious position. Some of the prominent members of their community were targeted and killed by the Kashmiri militants, as a result of which, a sense of fear and insecurity sneaked into the psyche of Pandits. In such circumstances, the community had to embark on a mass exodus from their motherland. Having been in exile for more than two decades now, many Pandits are taking to poetry and other forms of art to express their profound angst on their life as migrants and a gradual loss of their communitarian identity. However, in their new found voices, they can be seen yearning for their loss home or paradise while also lamenting on the suffering that the differential experience of exodus brought for their lives. In this paper, we attempt to look at the poetry of some of these poets in how it engages with the multitude of experiences that emanated from the Pandits' exodus and their subsequent life of being migrants.

For centuries, Kashmiri Pandits had lived in valley along with Muslims in a harmonious socio-cultural blend. As G.M.D. Sufi observes in his work, *Kashir: A History of Kashmir,* "the cult of Buddha, the teachings of Vedanta, the mysticism of Islam have one after another found a congenial home in Kashmir" (Sufi 19).The age old traditions of *Kashmiriyat* had long characterized the socio-cultural milieu of Kashmir as it had been an abode of people of varied religious and ethnic affiliations whose shared ways of living evolved a unique identity known as *Kashmiriyat*. In its essence, Kashmiriyat was characterized by the universal values of pluralism and tolerance. In this milieu, it was difficult to differentiate between people on

the basis of their religious affiliations. Scholars have often alluded to the "sufi/mystic tradition in Kashmiri poetry" as a case in point of "exemplary tolerance between different sects professing various religions'' (Dhar 44). The personality of Lala Arifa, or, Lala Ded, or, Lalleshwari, as she is commonly known among Kashmiris, is regarded as central to the memory of *Kashmiriyat* as it was through her poetry that the idea received its real essence. Outlining her humanist vision, Lala Ded observes:

> Shiva abides in all that is, everywhere
> Then do not distinguish between a Hindu and Musalman.
> If thou art wise, know thyself
> That is true knowledge of the Lord.
> I gave up falsehood, deceit, untruth,
> I saw the one in all fellow beings, and
> Preached the same doctrine to the mind.
> What then is the inhibition in eating?
> The food offered by a fellow human being? (Lal Ded qtd in Zutshi 22)

Lal Ded's tradition was carried forward by a tradition of mystics or sages through successive centuries. These sages or mystics or sufis are revered by all Kashmiris regardless of their religious belongings. Sheikhul Aalam, or, Sheikh Nooruddin, or, Nund Reshi (b. 1378), is regarded as Lal Ded's spiritual heir. His personality, revered by both Pandits and Muslims in equal measure, is another figure essential to the memory and meaning of Kashmiriyat. He took the universal ideas of Lal Ded to the realm of perfection. Following the spiritual footsteps of Lal Ded, Sheikh Nooruddin expresses his spiritual yearnings:

> That Lalla of Padamanpore,
> Who had drunk the fill of divine nectar.
> She was undoubtedly an avatar of ours,
> O God! Grant me the same spiritual power. (Nund Reshi qtd in Punjabi 109)

However, the rise of militancy in the late 1980s and early 1990s changed the scenario dramatically; the timeless bondage of love and trust between the two communities had been broken. The Pandits were suddenly overcome with apprehensions of fear and persecution while the Muslims began to harbor suspicion. As Sumantra Bose observes in his work *Kashmir: Roots of Conflict, Paths to peace*:

> Most of the Kashmir's Pandit minority became the first collateral casualties of the independence war, and the movement's leaders cannot avoid a measure of moral if not actual culpability for their fate. The Pandit flight also exposed a

> critical flaw embedded in the "independent Kashmir" concept—its complete inability to accommodate the multiple political allegiances regarding sovereignty and citizenship that exist even in the Kashmir Valley (the stronghold of pro-independence sentiment) and even more extensively in IJK as a whole. The Pandits, whose history, culture, ethnicity, and language are the same as the Valley's Muslims, suffered because as a community ultimately loyal to India they could not identify with the "patriotic" anti-India uprising sweeping their home region. (124)

Renowned Kashmiri-American poet Agha Shahid's poem "Farewell", which he refers to as a "plaintive love letter from a Kashmiri Muslim to a Kashmiri Pandit", movingly alludes to this tragic aspect:

> At a certain point I lost track of you.
> You needed me. You needed to perfect me:
> In your absence you polished me into the Enemy.
> Your history gets in the way of my memory.
> I am everything you lost. You can't forgive me.
> I am everything you lost. Your perfect enemy.
> Your memory gets in the way of my memory… (25-31)

Lalita Pandit, another Kashmiri-American academician and poet, reveals this aspect in her poem "Anantnag" in these lines:

> What of that? Now you are
> a stranger, an enemy. (38-39)
>
> Children stare with
> suspicion. They have learnt
> to hate; they are afraid.
> Hollow eyed ghosts
> walk the streets. (45-49)

Lalita Pandit also writes about the breakdown of the tragic events of early 1990s in her poem "Azaadi:1989-1995":

> You thought Azaadi
> Could be courted, wooed and wed
> Without shedding blood
> You thought it could be made

To become a wife who does not stray:
Never demands a price, a gift, a sacrifice. (73-78)

Ever since their migration from the land of their birth, now almost a quarter of a century ago, Kashmiri Pandits have felt a gradual erosion of their identity coupled with profound sense of rootlessness in which, as Lalita Pandit writes in her poem "Anantnag":

Still, my expatriate feet drag me
back to you.
Evening shadows stare at me
with blind eyes. (32-35)

The breakdown of the armed conflict in Kashmir and the exodus thereafter has been highly crucial to the collective consciousness of Kashmiri Pandits. The thought and intellectual activities have seen a cataclysmic transformation. The Kashmiri Pandits encountered terrible conditions in their forcibly initiated new life as 'migrants' in their own country. It was a time where history seemed to turn its tables on them. Just as the prominent Kashmiri Pandit poet Subhash Kak writes in his poem "Snow in Srinagar" about the assault on the Pandit identity by the forces of oppression:

Who knew then that decades later a terror will come to Srinagar?
and I will be unable to see my home where I was born
where we had played cowries on many new snows.
The terrorists want us to bury our past
forget the deeds of our ancestors.
We are banished because we remember
tales that grandfathers told us
because we remember
our story. (33-41)

They were forced to live a life of misery in the migrant camps in Jammu and other places in wretched conditions in an unfamiliar climate. These pathetic conditions of living in the migrant camps, coupled with the loss of home resulted in the Pandits, especially their elders being overcome by trauma, depression and dementia. Writing specifically about the mental disorders of Algerian refugees, but suggestive of similar victims of other worldwide conflicts, Frantz Fanon observes in his well-known work *The Wretched of the Earth*:

> These disorders take various forms. Sometimes they are visible as states of agitation which sometimes turn into rages; sometimes deep depression and

> tonic immobility with many attempted suicides; or sometimes finally anxiety states with tears, lamentations, and appeals for mercy. (279)

As various studies have explored, the trauma of migration transfigured most of the elder generation Pandits into a sort of lunacy in which they began to blame everything on migration. Trauma and depression, arising out of Pandits' loss of home and exodus, became emblems of this unfortunate community. Prominent Kashmiri Pandit migrant poet K L Chowdhury writes in his poem "Summer in Exile":

> The limbs refuse to carry,
> blank goes the mind,
> limp and prostrate the body,
> the lungs tired,
> the heart tardy. (10-14)
>
> Summer, like exile -
> a leveler of humanity,
> a fellow feeling
> of suffering and agony,
> a wringing of the sins
> like the sweat that pours out
> from every pore of the body.
> Summer in exile -
> a sublimation,
> a penance,
> a transcendence. (21-31)

In his study of the Pandit migrant life, noted Kashmiri sociologist Bashir Ahmad Dabla observes:

> The people who suffered more in these conditions were old, women, children and disabled-handicapped. The extreme heat in Jammu, even up to 44 degrees Celsius, was not bearable for these categories of people. In actuality, many individuals belonging to these groups suffered/collapsed/died because of dehydration, sun-strokes, skin reactions, neurological disorders, cardiac attacks, snake bites and so on. (81)

These were the new experiences which the Pandits confronted and engaged with a profundity which now finds expression in their literary endeavours. As they come to terms with their new existence of being cultural and spatial migrants, a new current dominates their literary expressions, one which is spurred by a multitude of tragic experiences that they confront. The

Pandit migrant poets create images and symbols out of these experiences. Their identity, uncertain of its future, is driven by a fast fading memory. In his poem "Dear Departed Ancestor", Subhash Kak refers to the river Jehlum (Vitasta in Sanskrit) as a symbolic memory:

> For while the taps run dry
> here in exile,
> *Vitasta* is only a memory (8-10)

All this remembrance or memory has to hold itself in a struggle for hope and one of the ways of charting out this struggle is the realm of poetry. And precisely, this is what the different migrant Pandit poets are aiming to achieve in their poetry. In her seminal work *Resistance Literature*, Barbara Harlow argues:

> Poetry is capable not only of serving as a means for the expression of personal identity or even nationalist sentiment. Poetry, as a part of the cultural institutions and historical existence of a people, is itself an arena of struggle. [It] alongwith other cultural and literary traditions constitute in an important way their means of identifying themselves as a group, as a people, no less than a nation, with a historicity of their own and a claim to an autonomous, self-determining role on the contemporary staging grounds of history. (33)

The past, which articulates one's identity, becomes almost indispensable to do away with. It has an all-pervasive presence in the lives of these people. It formulates the present of the people snatched of their homeland and identity. Carlos Fuentes, referring specifically to the Nicaraguan revolution but with implications for the struggles of people throughout the world, "We must go forward, because the present is unjust and insufferable, but we cannot kill the past in doing so, for the past is our identity, and without our identity we are nothing" (Fuentes qtd. in Harlow 82). It is their past which is enabling the Pandits to sustain the continuity with their roots of belonging while also defining their future as they come to terms with repression and dislocation. Memory becomes a central territory in which the present takes refuge as Subhash Kak writes in his poem "The Records of our Lives":

> And if memories don't matter, then how do we define
> ourselves? How is our responsibility
> measured? If our memories are forced
> by those around us, how much of credit
> is theirs? Where is our freedom? (28-32)

It was difficult for the Pandits to delineate their past from their present. For instance, in his poem "Exile", Subhash Kak writes:

Memories get hazy
even recounting doesn't help
I need to look at pictures
or listen to music to remember
and sometimes walking through narrow lanes of my town
a sudden perfume escaping from a window
halts my steps and I am transported
to my childhood years. (1-8)

K L Chowdhury also narrates a similar poignant experience in his poem "Keys":

Even after a decade in exile
I hang, from my girdle, this bunch of keys,
keys that I carried with me
when I was forced to flee,
keys to my home,
keys to my relics, my diary, my library,
keys that opened the sanctum
where my gods reside,
all the keys
except the keys to my new destination.
I keep wandering in exile,
carrying these keys
like an albatross. (1-13)

While coming to terms in exile in different parts of the world, the Pandits could still feel the tragic happenings which continued unabated back home in the valley of their birth. As K L Chowdhury writes in his poem "The Curse":

That mighty river of life,
the Vitasta,
now a foul gutter,
her bosom laid bare
and unable to hide the secrets
of broken bones and crooked skeletons
of her once daughters and sons. (9-15)

In his essay "Times of Joy Recalled in Wretchedness", Amitav Ghosh argues:

> If the twin terrors of insurgency and repression could be said to have engendered any single literary leitmotif, it is surely the narrative of the loss of Paradise. […] [T]he reason why there is no greater sorrow than the recalling of times of joy, is […] that this is a grief beyond consolation. (308-313)

The idea of loss becomes the new metaphorical ingredient of this type of poetry. Out of its specific set of circumstances, it tries to develop a new aesthetic out of the elements of a lost joy and the current moments of suffering. The joy of past and loss of present find their expression in these lines of the poem "Exile" by Subhash Kak:

> The best paradise
> is the paradise we are exiled from. (39-40)

Besides the aforementioned poets, there are many other migrant Pandit poets, writing in various languages, who are sharing and expressing the deep angst of living in exodus, away from the land of their birth. Poetry, like this, throws up new and interesting perspectives with which we try to redefine literature. Poems like these engage with historical experiences which spur them and hence are no way detached from their immediate realms of reality. In this type of poetry, the notions of aesthetic beauty and objectivity may not become a matter of precedence as it tries to set its own codes and parameters which emanate from various political or ideological terrains of contestation.

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Issues of Modernity in Vedanayakam's *The Life and Times of Pratapa Mudaliar*

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Abstract

Portraying a rather faithful account of the national character, domestic life, habits and manners of the people in Southern India, Mayuram Vedanayakam Pillai, in The Life and Times of Pratapa Mudaliar enlightens the reader's perception of a nineteenth century society. The novel chronologically traverses the life of Pratapa Mudaliar. Mostly, through narrated tales within each chapter, the author upholds the age old oral tradition. At times without a proper connection between the tales, the author narrates didactic tales through the mouth piece of the characters. As the first Tamil novel, the text brings in to focus certain cultural and traditional markers juxtaposed with the ideals of modernism or an emerging "newness". The paper travels through the latent issues of modernity within the text as an understanding of the tenets of modernism in India.

Keywords: culture**,** ideals**,** modernity, nationalism, reform, tradition

In almost all the Indian languages, the modern age begins with the first struggle for Indian independence in 1857. The impact of western civilization, the rise of political consciousness, and a resultant change in society could be seen in the literature of the time. Contact with the western world resulted in India's acceptance of western thought on the one hand, and rejection of it on the other, and resulted in an effort made to revive her ancient glory and Indian consciousness. Most of the writers attempted to amalgamate Indian and Western ideals giving rise to a stable national identity. Similar to other novels of the time, like Nedungadi's *Kundalata* (1887) and Chatterjee's *Anandmatt* (1882), the integrity of the nation is emphasised in Pratapa Mudaliar as well. Vikramapuri, being a political nation of its own, struggles to come out of the chaos of mob rule. There was no king and only a judge. The judge himself was corrupt and it is said about him, "He comes to the court perhaps once or twice a month. And on that occasion perhaps about a thousand lives would be ruined. He never actually enquires into a case but follows a blind rule"(163). Akin to other modern

prose pieces of the time, there is a social critique articulated in such literature. With Gnanambal rising to be the king, an image of political unity comes into shape. Though fictional in most respects, the elephant garlanding Gnanambal as king leads to sequential political and social stability in the village. Through her unsurpassed wisdom and bravery, there emerges a nation inclined to acts of justice. This coincides with the then Indian dream of integrating the nation from the divided rule.

Vedanayakam Pillai, through the voice of a character (Gnanambal), presents his own opinions on certain political, social and institutional issues of the day. The king visualises an ideal governance of his (her) kingdom and details the nature and function of an ideal ruler. Though not very explicit, the author might in many ways challenge at invoking an awareness of the then British rule in India. Nationalistic and patriotic spirit of revolt prevails in these writings. Gnanambal gives her notion of an ideal ruler:

> A king should not think of himself as one apart and distinct from the people. Or, should he do so, he should place the people above himself – like a loving father who is concerned about the wellbeing of his children...He should be easily approachable, his eyes filled with compassion, ears ever ready to heed complaints. (179)

Presumably, it might be satirical in implying to a Utopian state of affairs, something which India slightly envisaged then. At later instances, the British system of governance is directly condemned: "In the educational institutions set up by the British government, spiritual and moral values are not imparted and only some subjects relating to comfortable life are taught" (181). Apart from these concepts, other institutional issues such as the promotion of Tamil, the condition of advocates etc are also exemplified in the building of a nation under Gnanambal. Gnanambal, the king, advocates the use of Tamil and despises the use of English in courts. The author voices his outlook through the character: "We are not rejecting royal tongues like English and French as unworthy of study...But is it right to give up one's own language completely and concentrate only on the royal tongues?" (207) There is a call to cling on to one's own language, the vernacular. The introduction of English language in public sphere was a major aftermath of colonisation. There existed a society caught up between the ideals of acquiring English education and that of rediscovering the beauty of their own mother tongue. Presenting an alternative modernity, certain traditional characters in *Indirabai*, denounce the English language: "What hypocrites these people who learn English are!"

The birth of novel is predominantly associated with the social reform oriented movement in the nineteenth century. Education, especially of women was seen as a sign of social upliftment, a step closer to modernity. Likewise, the community concerned in *Pratapa Mudaliar* undergoes certain trouble of education. Right from the beginning, the novel commences with Pratapa's grandfather's zeal for education. "A young man of excellent education" (9), his grandfather went beyond the fear of ostracism and offers help to a poor, lifeless man on the street. Education doesn't build ignorance in characters like him. Moving on to the education of Pratapa, he was taught along with Kanakasabhi and Gnanambal. Their master, Devaraja Pillai was a man of wisdom and taught "uyir ezuthu, mei ezhuthu and uyir-mei ezhuthu" (14). Initially, while Pratapa's grandmother and father found education futile, it was his mother Sundarianni who insisted on his education. As evident from this, there is a certain level of wisdom, lacked by ignorance seen in the women characters like Sundarianni and Gnanambal.

Women have always been the focus of many literary works in the Indian Literature especially in an age of growing intellectual crisis and more so in a developing nation like India. There has been a constant conflict between tradition and modernity particularly in the portrayal of women. Early novelists have placed their women characters within a tradition. Sundarianni and Gnanambal, though display a great amount of practical intelligence, are tradition bound woman who are conditioned by conventions and she accepts the responsibility of being the custodian of family. At times in the text, Gnanambal is seen to admit the inferiority of women. She asserts,

> However much women may study, they cannot excel men. Women are like fast-growing plants that flower quickly only to wither away. On the other hand, men are like trees, slow of growth but providing enduring benefits. Her kind words encouraged us to study even harder. (24)

This notion, rather turns out to be contrary to what she achieves in her later life as a ruler where she testifies to the meaning of her name Gnanambal- "the goddess of wisdom". As a fair administrator of Vikramapuri, she reveals her practical wit. She cuts down the expenditure, not increasing the tax burden. The armed forces were annihilated without recourse to a war or the use of a weapon. She exercised what she felt was right. A striking element here is the role of the complaisant husband who abides by his wife's decision. As opposed to the male-dominated society of the time, the novel portrays a female in power. There is a stride away from not giving a woman a choice. Gnanambal was completely devoted to her nation. There existed a self-will, authority and conviction within her in par with the concepts of a man, maybe even more. She emerges as a new-woman who strives to

reform the society. Her adventures and her administrative reforms pursue the author's social reformist agenda. However, her journey in supremacy doesn't break away from a traditional wife seeking her husband's happiness. She also abides to the kings in the puranas- Rama, Dharmaputra, Harishchandra, Nala. What is evident here is the power of a woman who brings change in the society but still with due reverence and adherence to her own principles of tradition. At many instances, she states her position as a woman and says, "As a woman, I should have remained in the background, hardly visible" (218). The author presents modern thought but with a fear of complete separation from custom and tradition. The strong individualism of the women characters, Sundarianni and Gnanambal assists them in emerging as the heroines within the novel, similar to Chembaka in *Marthanda Varma* Their acumen and virtue make them better citizens, accepting the reality and moving along. To Pratapa, his mother was the mother of the universe and he worshipped her every day. Through her narratives and aphorisms, she taught Pratapa and Gnanambal. These two women characters are exalted throughout the novel and mainly at the end. Their name "spread far and wide and even reached Britain...and honoured them with the title of Royal Ladies." In one way, it's not just education that has liberated them but it's their good worth that has given them a place in the public. The ideal political state run by Gnanambal, though thoroughly seems to be fictional, reminds one of Sultana's dream in *Sultana's Dream*.

As the first Tamil text in the genre of novel, *Pratapa Mudaliar* does not completely, at any cost accept the European ideals blindly. Though there are references to literary texts of Bacon, Milton and Socrates showcasing their awareness of Western literature, there is no complete reliance on the Western ways of life. In Gnanambal's letter to her Athan, she says "Men and women there (Europe) enter into matrimony only when they are mature...they meet in private and move with each other before they marry without even meeting each other? ...Clearly, those who wish to usher that state of affairs into this country cannot be patriots." There is a direct disapproval of the European ways. Also, in Devaraja Pillai's narration of Ananthiah's tale, he says Ananthiah "berated this land and its culture and praised Europe." Through this story, the author gives light to what is acceptable and not acceptable within the European community. Blind acceptance of the Englishmen led to Ananthiah's lack of faith and consequently failure in life. Here, a question arises to what Vedanayakam, as the author tries to communicate to the readers. The deterioration of one's own language under British is also protested within the novel.

Being an instructing and morally edifying text, the author has posed many issues of modernity with the potential to reform and eventually reform the society. The chapters

devoted to married life, stories about ill-natured and good natured women, measures to reform wicked husbands and lame shrewish wives all to seem to be part of Vedanayakam's address to the society. There is a demonstration of the socio-cultural modernity in the colonised land. Distinctly modern values such as individuality and radical parity are articulated throughout the text. But unlike other texts, *Pratapa Mudaliar* does not celebrate modernity or the introduction of English language. The novel exhorts significance of one's own tradition and culture with slight modern outlooks.

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Women, Race, Patriarchy: A Transnational Feminist Critique of *Rich Like Us* and *Thousand Splendid Suns*

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Abstract

Transnational feminism emanates from Postcolonial feminist theories, which emphasize on how colonial aftermath has shaped, molded and is continuing to influence the social, political, economic and psychological oppression of people around the world. It foregrounds its assumptions on the premises that gender subjectivity and suffrage is not alike for every woman living in different regions. Their lived experiences under patriarchal and capitalist powers are different with respect to their race, ethnicity, religion and belief systems prevalent in their societies. The text under discussion here are Thousand Splendid Suns by Khalid Hosseini and Rich Like Us by Nayantara Sehgal, both authors being pioneers in their respective domain. The article seeks to explore the subjectivities and male oppression of women and their activisms and subsequent liberation from their misfortunes and reclaiming of their identities. The present papers shows the struggle and activism of these two women with respect to their geographical location and how they reclaim and assert their individuality, one in a foreign land and the other by returning to her homeland as a changed and independent woman who not only emancipates herself but also influences the other women in the oppressive patriarchal order prevalent in her society.

Keywords: Transnational Feminism, Post-Colonial feminism, Gender subjectivities, Patriarchy, Sisterhood, Cross-border migration. Hegemony.

Theorizing Transnational Feminism

The paper seeks to explore the subjectivities and male oppression of women and their activisms and subsequent liberation from their misfortunes and reclaiming of their identities. The women in question here are from two different racial and national backgrounds, i.e., the white woman, Rose, from colonial England, and Laila, a modern Afghani teenage girl, fighting against all odds during Taliban ruled Afghanistan. The present papers shows the struggle and activism of these two women with respect to their geographical location and how they reclaim and assert their individuality, one in a foreign land and the other by returning to her homeland as a changed and independent woman who not only emancipates herself but also influences the other women in the oppressive patriarchal order prevalent in her society.

When we talk about *feminism* as a movement now in the post millennial world, we understand that it cannot be applied to women from all ethnic backgrounds, race, colour and variegated patriarchies. The debate about feminism has long been under the prevalent discourse that all women are not same thus making their experiences with the world not being similar either. It largely depends upon the socio-political and economic environments that they are living in and hence they experience different subjectivities at the hands of their male counterparts. So, when we say 'woman suffrage', we mean it differently for white, brown or black women. And when we try to bring together their plight and juxtapose it with the plight of other women from around the world, it gives a common ground of them being the victims of their circumstances, largely propagated and influenced by socio-cultural biases and norms. Similarly, the term post-colonial feminism does not represent all the non-white women but specifically women from the once colonized nations. In these terms, the black women too have a representative term, 'Black Feminism' to highlight their struggle and movement against patriarchal legacies and the list of such feminisms goes on and on.

The western feminists have long been circumscribing the misfortunes and suffering of non-white women and white women alike. This euro-centric approach to feminism is now being shunned and the focus of third wave feminists/feminism is now toward the categorization of different women and their variegated physical and psychological injustices at the hands of men in their societies. So in order to bring together the different feminism under one roof the term 'transnational feminism' has emerged in the recent times. Transnational feminism tries to bring together all the feminisms under one umbrella so as to encompass the experiences, activisms and agencies of all the women and understand their multifarious dilemmas in totality.

Transnational feminism is an off-shot of Postcolonial feminist theories, which focus on how colonial aftermath has shaped and molded and is continuing to influence the social, political,

economic and psychological oppression of people around the world. It discards the notion that all the people around the globe encounter similar kinds of injustices and inequalities with respect to gender biases. It foregrounds its assumptions on the premises that gender subjectivity and suffrage is not alike for every woman living in different regions. Their lived experiences under patriarchal and capitalist powers are different with respect to their race, ethnicity, religion and belief systems prevalent in their societies. It rejects the notion of 'global sisterhood' while simultaneously emphasizing for importance of equality among women across the boundaries.

The term 'Transnational Feminism' is "similar to concepts of "women of colour" feminisms (e.g. The Combahee River Collective 1982), "third world" feminisms (e.g. Mohanty et al. 1991), "multi-cultural" feminisms (e.g. Shohat 1998), "international" feminisms (e.g. Enloe 1990), and "global" feminisms (e.g. Morgan 1984). . ."(Swarr and Nagar 3).

Highlighting the constraints of international feminisms and global feminisms, Nagar and Swarr argue:

> Whereas international feminisms are seen as rigidly adhering to nation-state borders and playing inadequate attention to forces of globalization, global feminisms have been subjected to critical scrutiny for prioritizing northern feminist agendas and perspectives and for homogenizing women's struggles for sociopolitical justice, especially in colonial and neocolonial contexts (Swarr and Nagar, 2010, 4).

Arguing Transnational Feminism in the context of selected Texts

The present paper is a transnational feminist critique of women characters from three different racial backgrounds, European, Indian, and Afghan, who fight against all odds in the oppressive patriarchal society. The present study cannot be claimed to be a mere feminist study, *per se*, but it would neither be appropriate to affix a common term like international feminist, third world feminist, global feminist or post colonial feminist critique though women in question here differ on the grounds of race and ethnicity. But when we say transnational feminist critique, we can tend to break the monolithic notion that of the third world women as passive recipients of violence and oppression who need a euro-centric feminist discourse which appropriates their sufferings and gives agency to their cry for liberation. Inderpal Grewal and Caran Kaplan's concept of "transnational feminism" is useful in understanding the sufferings and continuous resistance of geographically re/dislocated women character within their families and society at large and their attempt to gain freedom and negotiation of power with the patronizing men. Grewal and Kaplan argue that:

> We see post modernism as a critique of modernist agendas as they are manifested in various forms and locations around the world. Our critiques of certain forms of

feminism emerge from their willing participation in modernity with all its colonial discourses and hegemonic First World formations that wittingly or unwittingly lead to the oppression and exploitation of many women (Grewal and Kaplan, 2002, 2).

In the novel *Rich like Us*, we find a transnational movement of the female protagonist, Rose, a white European woman, and her development in a foreign/colonized landscape. Rose gives us a picture of the first world, white, colonial woman who leaves her 'superior' status and enters into a marriage alliance with an already married, brown, colonized Indian male, Ram. The other character, Mona, the first wife of Ram, though does not move physically from one nation border to another, but, she is reduced to a second level by her husband when he marries Rose and brings her home to live with Mona. Mona is represented as a marginalized woman suffering at the hands of her male counterpart as well as, a superior, white woman as her co-wife. Though, as we shall later see, the suffering of Rose are no less irrespective of her being white and belonging to the side of colonizers.

Grewal and Kaplan's concept of transnational feminism gives us an insight into the study of the development of the character of Rose as seen through her transborder movement thereby reflecting on the changes which she undergoes along with the geographical change in location. Rose belonged to a white, lower-middle class family and the luxuries of life haven't ever stepped inside her threshold. She has seen her father working hard and earning just enough for the survival of them all and her mother working rigorously, day in and day out like any other housewives then. She remembers how "her mother's arms elbow-deep in the steam and carbolic soap of the week's washing, hanging clothes to dry on the line outside if there was sun . . ." (Sahgal, 2003, 65). The kind of society which Rose grew up and lived in was no different than the society which she chose by accompanying Ram to India. The lower middle-class women of white, colonial England were no better than the middle class Indian women when it came to gender subjectivity. The position of Rose's mother in England was no better than Mona, Rose's co-wife who shared the similar patriarchal oppression at the hands of their respective husbands. Rose's mother was nothing more than a child-bearer for her husband who continued producing unwanted children. Rose recalls about her mother's state—"tired sex at night . . . hope-against-hope that might abort a pregnancy. Miscarriages were better than nothing, but in the end you were back to full-term deliveries, your bruised and battered body returned, a loose empty sack to fill up again" (66). We see Mona too undergoing the similar ordeal when Ram enters into an extramarital affair with Rose abroad and never even bothers to revert to the hurried telegram which brings him the news of his newborn son back in India. Mona too is here seen as a victim of her husband's sexual gratification without a trace of love or respect for her. His cool and casual tone in telling

about her new born son to Rose affirms the above argument. He says, "He was born last month. My father cabled the news of his birth." (42).

Rose's development in a foreign land is prominent after she comes to India. We find Rose searching for meaning and independence in her life and this also leads to her relationships with other women from that foreign land which ultimately shapes her life. The change in geographical location and ethnicity shapes their relationship and develops a mutual understanding which their male counterparts are unable to provide them with. The differences between their economic status, ethnicity and cultural values bring them together and stand for each other under suffocating political conditions and patriarchy. Initially Rose is unhappy being the 'other woman' in the life of Ram and Mona and we find her hoping for Mona to be dead one fine day. She fancies, "everything would work out all right if Mona were dead. If only she'd be dead, dead, dead, she had hammered out the thought night after night after night" (106). Mona too asserts her resistance and anger against Rose who she considers as a wicked white woman who has enticed her husband and taken him away from her. The tussle of the two women for the love and attention of one man is explicit initially:

> Mona's protest was far from silent. Calling upon the Almighty to spell out what she had done in this or past lives to deserve such outrageous treatment, she had wept with vigour. Rose, who had not set her eyes on her, only heard her loud, unnerving lamentations. Some nights she got so carried away that Ram, tossing and grumbling in his bed, would finally get up and go down and Mona would reclaim her husband for a few minutes, an hour or a night (62).

Mona is triply- marginalized here because she finds herself being emasculated under firstly, a white woman, who happens to be her co-wife, secondly, by a chauvinist husband who lest cares about her rights as a wife and more importantly as an emotional being, and thirdly under the colonized India which is still far from independence. She is a victim of conservative Hindu patriarchal family, which is itself being subject to the colonial rule of British and more so of an *intrusion* by the representative of that imperialist power—Rose, in her own household. But the position of Rose is no where better than Mona except for the fact that she has more financial stability now than what she enjoyed in her home country. Rose works along with Ram in their newly set up business and have perks of socializing with the who's who of Lahore because Ram is a well-connected man. But Rose finds herself being suffocated in the cultural practices of the nation in which she has moved forever. After she reaches India accompanied with Ram, she finds herself plunging into the deep-rooted patriarchy prevalent in Indian society. Ram marries her with Hindu rituals but she immediately becomes aware of her *forbidden otherness* when Ram's father angrily says, "Take that woman out of my sight" (45). Ram's love for female flesh is clearly evident when

he justifies his keeping two wives by supporting his act with a mythical fact, where he tells Rose that, "King Dasratha, Rama's father, had four wives . . . Muslims can have *only* four, at a time. We are more adventurous, even polyandrous" (63).

But Rose's realization of her identity and self-awareness comes with her relationship with the other women in the foreign land. These two other women being Mona and Sonali, and with regard to race, geography, culture, and religion, Rose comes to understand her position with respect to women from other cultures and locations. Joan Borsa calls it "politics of location" where she argues that, "those places and spaces we inherit and occupy, which frame our lives in very specific and concrete ways, which are as much a part of our psyches as they are a physical or geographical placement" (36).The idea, politics of location, was first articulated by Adrienne Rich in her essay "Notes Toward a Politics of Location", where she argues that "from the outset body had more than one identity . . .the body I was born into was not only female and white, but Jewish-enough for geographic location to have played . . . a determining part".

The women in question here, though ethnically and geographically different, but are similar in their experiences in a particular locale. Ram's voyeurism and his love for women drift him away from his wives, and bring the two women closer to each other. After he falls for another white woman, Marcella, Rose is psychologically and emotionally drawn towards Mona, who is never given agency to claim her location or tell her story. Rose is aware of her 'otherness' as a white woman in Dev's household (as Ram is reduced to a vegetative state and Nishi has no say when it comes to Dev and his decisions regarding the finances) and Rose remains an outsider relying on the petty amount that Dev reimburses for her. Her fight is not only against the oppressive Hindu joint family where women like Mona have no agency and liberty but, it is also a fight against patriarchy running down from one generation to another—i.e. from father to son, which entraps Rose. Her definition of being a woman changes according to her geographical location, social and economic status and ethnicity. She realizes that all women, irrespective of their color and race, undergo some sort of patriarchal oppression, but their experiences are one of their kinds and cannot be categorized as similar. The female identity that she has in England was different to what she assumed after she came and lived in India. She came to explore herself, her identity, to India of her own accord. "It came to her she'd been in the grip of no fate at all. She had been beckoned by curiosity, lured and compelled by mystery, come halfway round the world following the unknown" (281).

The transnational feminist critique of *Thousand Splendid Suns*, attempts to show the encounter of Laila, the victim of oppressive Afghan patriarchal system and equally dominating political state of affairs, and her cross border movement to Pakistan in order to escape the suffocating and brutal rule of Taliban in Afghanistan, only to return back later to

liberate her people from the miseries they were going through. The study of *Thousand Splendid Suns* does not directly gives us the transnational feminist critique of a cross border movement of the protagonist Laila to a foreign land and her struggles for survival and recognition over there, rather, it shows how the protagonist found her identity and asserted her freedom in her homeland which tried to alienate her as a foreign, deviant body. Laila's struggle against the political forces working outside, and against her cruel husband inside the household, made her life equally difficult as it was for Rose in a foreign land. Laila grew up in a soviet-ruled Afghanistan which later came under the *Mujahideens* and than the *Talibanis* before the country was finally liberated of their oppressive regime. Thus we see Laila struggling against patriarchy and oppressive political powers operating in her country throughout her life. But it was during the rule of soviet-communists that Laila had the best of her times. Babi, her father once remarked, "Women have always had it hard in this country, Laila, but they are probably more free now, under the communists, and have more rights than they've ever had before . . . it's a good time to be a woman in Afghanistan. And you can take advantage of that, Laila" (Hosseini, 2008, 133). "More freedom" and "more rights" give the readers a clear picture of the restricted amount of freedom with the Afghan women and their fight for identity and survival.

Babi was the source of liberation and hope for Laila as he stood against the centuries-old tradition of especially Pashtun regions of Afghanistan who lived by ancient tribal laws and considered issues of women equality and liberation as an insult to their tradition. But after Babi's death, Laila's only hope for a better future for herself dashed to the ground. The only other pillar of her strength after Babi was Tariq who's sudden departure left Laila crippled and lame. Her marriage of convenience to Rasheed, a man triple her age was the last blow to her dreams of liberation and self recognition. But Laila did not leave hope and her first attempt at liberating herself of Rasheed's oppression was when she crossed the culturally normative boundaries built around the muslim women's sexuality. Rasheed married Laila to use her sexuality and womanhood to carry forward his name through a male heir. But Laila, who carried Tariq's child in her womb, misled Rasheed into believing it to be his child. Her act of defiance came from the fact that she defied the norms of virginity and still managed to save herself and her unborn child from the wrath of Rasheed. On the night of their wedding, after Rasheed made it out with Laila and fell asleep she "quietly reached beneath the mattress for the knife she had hidden their earlier. With it, she punctured the pad of her index finger. Then she lifted the blanket and let her finger bleed on the sheets where they had lain together" (214). Laila broke the stereotype of a naïve, virgin, helpless woman on her wedding night and took the matter of her and her unborn's survival in her hands. She crossed the psychological boundaries of normativity laid down by patriarchy in her country and never felt

any sort of guilt about the whole thing. She wanted her and Tariq's child to come into this world who would remind her of the good old days when she was the happiest. Laila here can be seen as a "Colonized Woman" an important site of contestation for her "Indigenous Colonizing Male" counterpart who tried to possess, overpower, dominate and control her sexuality and legitimize it for his vested interests. Laila challenged, defied and confronted this oppression when she used her sexuality for her own safety and wellbeing.

Laila not only crossed the psychological boundaries of oppression but also tried to liberate Mariam, her co-wife and later on the only companion. She was the one who hatched a plan to escape from the regular torture and beatings received from Rasheed and encouraged the meek and docile Mariam to run away with her to Pakistan along with the children. Crossing the threshold was not less than crossing the border of Afghanistan during that time as the country was under the afflicting and orthodox rule of Taliban. It was the worst of time for every woman then because moving out of threshold without a male accomplice amounted to severe beating and even persecution for women during that time. Laila once again challenged and opposed the patriarchy and took charge of not only her life but that of another woman too. She rebelled against the watchful patriarchal forces operating psychologically as well as physically around them.

Laila's relocating to Pakistan with Tariq and her children was not only transnational move across the borders but also allowed her greater independence when she turned to other geographical location. Though Pakistan does not give her the sort of intellectual, sexual and physical freedom which she yearns for but it acts as a substitute for her suffocating life in Afghanistan. "It is a good life, Laila tells herself, a life to be thankful for. It is, in fact, precisely the sort of life she used to dream for herself in her darkest days with Rasheed" (378). She gets a respite from a life controlled and dominated by an abusive husband, Rasheed. She realizes her dream of living a fulfilling life with her childhood love, Tariq, and her two children. The geographical change brings new avenue of hope for her—a life full of contentment and marital bliss. The absolute control of husband over his wife is similar to the control of colonizer over the colonized and thus the kind of oppression that Laila went through during her stay with Rasheed gave way to domestic patriarchy which was a result of the absolute control of the political forces like Soviets, the Mujahideens and the Talibans later on. The political forces operating in Afghanistan were a substitute for White/western colonizers who domesticated and enslaved the women of Afghanistan by giving complete control of their lives to men folk.

Laila's upbringing and the ideals of Babi, her father, were in contrast to what the new Talibani regime forced on people. Her life was in sharp contrast to how she had lived when her father was alive. She explores her sexuality at a very young age and has very little

apprehension whatsoever after she consummates her love for Tariq. She enjoys more freedom and independence while her father was alive but things turn upside down for her after she loses her family and has to marry a man much older than her who is also a typical patriarch and dislikes even the little freedom which women might enjoy.

Laila's attempt to move from Afghanistan to Pakistan is an effort to have social autonomy and freedom. After Mariam kills Rasheed she convinces Laila to run away to Pakistan with Tariq and her children only to be in Afghanistan and take the repercussion of the murder for which she is shot as per Talibani law. She marries Tariq after reaching Pakistan but marrying Tariq does not simply mean a shift of Laila from one patriarchal head to another, but the geographical change helps her shape her own sense of identity. Her association with Mariam and the sudden departure without Mariam has somewhere left an emotional vaccum inside Laila. The life she is now enjoying is because Mariam has laid down hers to let Laila realize her dreams. in one of the telling scenes:

> Laila has her own dreams. In them, she is always back at the house in Kabul, walking the hall, climbing the stairs. She is alone but . . . sometimes she hears a woman's low-pitched humming of an old Herati song. But when he walks in, the room is empty. There is no one there . . . The dream leaves Laila shaken (370).

Laila could never help herself forget what happened with Mariam, Babi and Mammy (Laila's mother) and Tariq back in Afghanistan. Moving away from her home country into a new land and enjoying a life full of freedom and conjugal bliss, did not help Laila forget the traumas her loved ones had once suffered. After she hears from Tariq about the USA declaring a war against Afghanistan and the people being killed there, she gets agitated at the thought and wonders helplessly:

> what happened to Babi and Mammy is happening to someone now in Afghanistan, not when some unsuspecting girl or boy back home has just been orphaned by a rocket as she was. Laila cannot bring herself to say it. It's hard to rejoice. It seems hypocritical, perverse (375).

The coalition forces have driven out the Talibans out of all the major cities of Afghanistan and this gives Laila a new hope for a new Afghanistan which she has wanted to live in. she tells Tariq of her decision to move back to their homeland:

> A year ago, she would have gladly given an arm to get out of Kabul. But in the last few months, she has found herself missing the city of her childhood . . . but it isn't the homesickness or nostalgia that has Laila thinking of Kabul so much these days. She had become plagued by restlessness. She hears of schools built in Kabul, roads repaved, women returning to work, and her life here, pleasant as it is, greatful as she is for it, seems . . . insufficient to her, inconsequential. Worse yet, wasteful. Of late,

she has started hearing babi's voice in her head. You can be anything you want, Laila, he says. I know this about you. And I also know that when this war is over, Afghanistan is going to need you (378).

Laila's realization of her dreams comes from the perspective that she receives after moving away from her country to another. The fulfilling life that she enjoys during her short stay in Pakistan strengthens her ties with her native land even strongly. Her defining moment as a strong Afghan Muslim woman comes after she enjoys economic, sexual and social freedom in a foreign land and returns stronger than ever before as Dalia Kandiyoti rightfully argues, "transnational roots frequently causes women to belong nowhere, rather than belonging everywhere" (Tucker, 2008, 94).

The closing of *Thousand Splendid Suns* brings the above argument in full realization. Laila goes back to Afghanistan, though not sure of her future, but she is sure to serve her country and reform her of long suffered oppressive regime of Talibans and other warlords. She does not reject the social codes and cultural values of her country but makes an effort to globalize her country and free its people of the conservative and oppressive ideologies. Rose on the other hand came to a foreign land of her free will and remained there till her death. She fully realizes the customs of the foreign land of which she is a part now but her continuous effort to establish her identity and make the natives accept her existence not as a white woman, but as an inseparable part of their family and customs. The attempt here is to understand how women from third world countries and those from first world come together and share their experiences and dissolve the nation-state boundaries and express resistance towards different patriarchies operating around the world.

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Coleridge's Memory: Sickness, Opium Dream and Recollections

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Abstract

The focus of this study is to locate the influence of Coleridge's memory, his frequent sickness, opium dreams and the recollections of these dreams in the writing process of the poem The Rime of the Ancient Mariner. This study attempts to understand how in the writing process of this poem, Coleridge's memories operate under certain medical conditions; thus, I want to examine the interface between disease and memory in the poet's creative process. Hence, my approach to analyse the interrelation between diseases and memory in this article is mainly biographical.

Keywords: Coleridge, Disease and illness, Opium, Dream, Recollections

For my understanding of Coleridge's memory, his frequent sickness and his recollections of opium dream I owe a great debt to Livingstone Lowes's *The Road to Xanadu* (1927), M. H. Abrams' *The Milk of Paradise* (1934), Elisabeth Schneider's *Coleridge, Opium and 'Kubla Khan'* (1966), Molly Lefebure's *Coleridge and the Bondage of Opium* (1974), Patrick Adair's *The Waking Dream* (1967), Alethea Hayter's *Opium and the Romantic Imagination* (1968), Jennifer Ford's *Coleridge on Dreaming* (1998). I want to carry forward the ground breaking researches in Coleridge scholarships, made by L. Lowes, M.H. Abrams, Molly Lefebure, Patrik Adair, Elisabeth Schneider, Alethea Hayter and Jennifer Ford by focussing the under-emphasised aspect of memory in Coleridge scholarships, and I will discuss Coleridge's memory from the point of eighteenth century disease and medicine. I begin this discussion by drawing attention to Livingstone Lowes's propositions that the poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*[1] is 'subdued to the hues of that heaving and phosphorescent sea below the verge of consciousness from which they have emerged . . . what the teeming chaos of the notebook gives us is the charged and electrical atmospheric background of a poet's mind', (Lowes, *Road to Xanadu*, 29) and behind the poem there 'lie also innumerable blendings and

fusings of impressions, brought about below the level of conscious mental processes' (278). Further he goes on to say that Coleridge with his

> tenacious and systematising memory . . . consciously recalled, through their strong associative links, the various details which he had read and no less consciously combined them. Conscious recollection and recombination played their part in the complex operation which brought the diverse elements together (Lowes 49).

Rather than seeking Romantic stereotypes about 'the poet's mind' or 'the conscious mental process' of the poet or the romantic imagination, I am particularly interested in the poet's memory. Lowes suggests that the shaping spirit of (Coleridge's) imagination 'must have materials on which to work, and a memory steeped in travel-lore was this time the reservoir on which it drew' (49), and 'much of the topography of the "Ancient Mariner" is derived from the accounts of eighteenth-century as well as early modern explorers to the North and South Poles' (Fulford 172). Lowes quotes from Coleridge's Anima Poetae: 'the imagination . . . the true inward creatrix, instantly out of the chaos of elements or shattered fragments of memory, puts together some form to fit it' (*Road to Xanadu* 52). Among the books which have left their luminous tracks in his memory were Captain Cook's *Voyage*, through its paragraph about the multi-coloured animalcules, and Priestley's *Optics*, through its chapter on 'Light from Putrescent Substance', and the fifth volume of *Philosophical Transactions*, through Father Bourzes's account of the shining appearances in the wakes of ships (Lowes 74). When Coleridge came to write *The Ancient Mariner*, 'his memory was crowded with impressions of terrible beauty of desolate and icy seas' (Lowes 124). In his essay 'Coleridge's Poetic Sensibility', George Whalley explains that Coleridge was actually aware of the dynamic nature of perception and of thinking; of how 'the eye is reinforced &supported by the images of Memory flowing in on the impulses of immediate Impression' (Beer 27).

Coleridge was born at Devon and sometime a citizen of Bristol, passed his most impressionable years at the ancient foundations of British nautical tradition as a boy and man, and hence, it was very natural that some intimate and permanent impressions of the current terms and superstitions of the sea influenced Coleridge's memory in the writing process of the poem. Coleridge's attitude to memory is very complex and equivocal, and in the chapter, entitled, 'Memory and Perception' in his book *Coleridge and Wordsworth: The Poetry of Growth*, Stephen Prickett rightly argues that:

> The final state of the Mariner doomed at uncertain intervals to recount the guilt and terror of his own moral awakening, remains ambiguous. Just as all sense-perception is ambiguous, so too memory is capable of a variety of conflicting or equivocal interpretations 9Prickett 124).

Samuel Taylor Coleridge was 'often a deeply troubled man' (Cunningham 252) and his frequent sickness and miserable diseased condition led him to take opium and as a result led him to visualise several opium dreams. This section tries to analyse how the memorisation of these opium dreams contribute to Coleridge's poetics in *The Ancient Mariner*. The important and significant fact, as noted by M. H. Abrams in his *The Milk of Paradise* is that—

> in "the well of memory" the fragments of the land (fantastic land) assume as legitimate a place as any recollections from life. When the poet's selective spirit hovers over the well, these images rise to the surface as readily as any others, to be incorporated in his creation side by side with the scenes from everyday life (Abarms 05).

In her article 'Coleridge as revealed in the Letters' Earl Leslie Griggs discusses a number of letters, written by Coleridge to his friends, which gives us enough evidence of his constant illness and disease. Coleridge suffered enormously from rheumatism, gout, dysentery, diarrhoea, indigestion, disorder and depression which he frequently mentions in his letters and 'Coleridge's addiction to opium, as the letter shows was the major tragedy of his life' (Beer 37). Humphry House argues that 'his extreme illness and his unhappiness in personal relations intensified his habit of introspection' (House 142), and Coleridge's diverse 'range of dream experience was largely due to opium' (153). We know that Coleridge had taken opium several times before 1791 and experienced to some great extent the effects of drug, and had already experienced opium dream of horror in 1796 of sufficient intensity to have left their impress on the poems of that year. In a Coleridge's letter, written in 20-24 December, 1796 there are frequent references to his recourse to opium habit than he ever made. M.H. Abrams agrees with Lowes's view that *The Ancient Mariner* is 'an abnormal product of an abnormal nature under abnormal conditions' all having been 'conceived and composed under the influence of opium' (Abrams 35). We must understand that Coleridge had experienced the type of opium dream which might have exerted remarkable influence before the conception of the poem *The Ancient Mariner* in the afternoon of November 13, 1797 and had a part in memorising the scenery and sensation of Coleridge's dream. Molly Lefebure in her book *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A Bondage of Opium* (1977), proposed that:

> Opium is a great aid to the process of fantasy-building, because opium opens the mind; it removes barriers of memory and inhibition; it releases a tide (S. T.C repeatedly used the word stream) of memories of persons, situations, things actually experienced, or even read. All come thronging from where they have previously lain dormant, apparently totally forgotten; they manifest themselves in such vibrating urgency of detail that they appear more real than reality (Lefebure 55).

A careful interpretation of Wordsworth's account of the poem's origin bears out this theory that Coleridge recollects his friend 'Cruikshank's dream of the skeleton ship with figures in it' and Wordsworth further demands that the 'spectral persecution had been in Coleridge's memory from the first'. Thomas De Quincey gives evidence that such a plan had been forming in Coleridge's mind and Coleridge had 'meditated a poem on delirium, confounding its own dream-scenery with external things' (De Quincey, Works, II, 145). The phrases like 'A poem on delirium,' 'dream scenery,' 'spectral persecution' suggest that these rose at once in Coleridge's memory at the mere suggestion of a skeleton ship. It seems likely that some such plan came to his memory when he wrote, on a page of the *Gutch notebook,*

> in that eternal & delirious misery—
> wrathfires—
> inward desolation—
> an horror of great darkness
> great things that on the ocean
> counterfeit infinity— (Beer, *Coleridge:the Visionary*, 143)

From the notebook it is evident that Coleridge had opium hallucinations while in the very process of reading about the materials he later utilised in the poem. In this poem, as soon as the crew hangs the dead white bird around the Mariner's neck, the woman-specter, who is white as leprosy emerges on a western wave. Coleridge locates the sources of the disease in the skin of a ghostly, white woman. In his notebooks, Coleridge also pictured a white woman as a career of disease and moral depravity. In one of his well-known account of dreams, he told of being 'followed up and down by a frightful pale woman who, I thought, wanted to kiss me, and had the property of giving a shameful Diseases by breathing on the face' (CN, I:1250)[2]. Hence the diseased white woman is clearly the result of Coleridge's memorisation of a 'frightful pale woman' of his earlier dream. M. H. Abrams argues very aptly that—

> it is almost unbelievable that scenes which impressed him so vividly should not sink into his memory, to be later metamorphosed in the crucible of dreams . . . Coleridge more or less consciously clothed the bits from his reading in the new and glowing material of his dream memories (Abrams 40).

In *The Statesman's Manual*, Coleridge demonstrates the relations among dream, waking states, recollections of dreams and nervous system—

> the dreams, which we most often *remember*, are produced by the nascent sensations and inward Motiunculae of the waking state. Hence, too, they are more capable of being remembered, because, passing more gradually into our waking thoughts, they are more likely to associate with our perceptions after sleep. Accordingly, when the nervous system is approaching to the waking states, a sort of under-consciousness blends with our dreams . . . (White 40).

Coleridge's recognition that opium allows access to 'trains of forgotten Thoughts' because of its effect on the physiological 'seminal organisation' of memory posits memory as both passive, active, visual and verbal. In a notebook entry of October 1803, recasting an earlier one of 1799, Coleridge shows himself aware of the power of the association and subscribes it partly to opium:

> What is Forgetfulness? Renew the state of affection or bodily Feeling, same or similar – sometimes dimly similar/ and instantly the trains of forgotten thought rise from their living catacombs!— Old men, and Infancy/ and Opium, probably by its narcotic effect on the whole seminal organisation, in a large Dose, or after long use, produces the same effect on the visual, and passive memory (Adair 51).

Coleridge's understandings of imagination and memory was deeply influenced by contemporary medical debates that took place between medical men such as John Brown and William Cullen in the 1790s and John Abernethy and William Lawrence from 1814 to 1820 on the nature of life, physiology and anatomy. Neil Vickers in *Coleridge and the Doctors: 1795-1806* (2004) connects medicine to Coleridge's intellectual development and his theory of the imagination; in the first chapter, titled, 'Medicine in the 1790s: A Very Brief Introduction', Vickers, ramifies some theoretical controversies in eighteenth-century medicine, shows the rise of the view that disease, and notes that possibly all disease is caused by disturbances in the nervous system. Jennifer Ford in her seminal study *Coleridge on Dreaming: Romanticism Dreams and the Medical Imagination* (1998), shows the 'physical and medical nature of dreams, dreaming and imagination' and 'the origin of dreams and the peculiar role of his body and the imagination played in them'(Ford 7, 8). This article tries to establish the role of disease and memory in his dreaming process and the medical nature of

memory in recollecting the opium dreams. Coleridge's memory was not only the evoker of sublime dream vision, but it also partook of a corporeal, physiological and diseased existence.

In the earliest of his notebook dream writings, Coleridge presents his dreams as intimately connected with his (diseased) bodily process. Coleridge's own subtitling of the 1800 edition of *The Ancient Mariner* as 'A Poet's Reverie' encourages further interpretations. Coleridge's nightmares were deeply grounded in theories of volition as a mode of touch, as well as in the recognition that nightmares are very specific degrees of dreaming-experience which were often characterised by an alarming sensation of emptiness and nothingness. According to Thomas McFarland, 'the unexplainable fact of a diseased volition was the most mysterious and destructive of the ills under which Coleridge laboured' (Beer, *Bicentenary Essays*, 135). For Coleridge, nightmares were amongst the most terrifying and physical immediate types of dreams. Hence, his memory becomes 'diseasedly retentive', a cause not only of atonic gout, but also of poetry, sleep and those insistent 'frightful Dreams' (Griggs, *Collceted Letters*, Vol. II, 975). A nightmare world may well be one in which stupor rather sleep dominates, but this nightmare stupor is occasioned by painful sensation' (*Coleridge's Notebook*, III, 4046). Jeremy Davies in *Bodily Pain in Romantic Literature* posits that, in *The Ancient Mariner* 'Coleridge gives us a way of thinking about physical pain . . . by picking out what pain feels like. *The Rime* suggests that bodily hurt is best characterised by the textures of its absence' (Davies 103-4). The mariner's experience, just like Coleridge's experience, reveals a truly physical and painful memory that is 'diseasededly retentive' and by narrating its experience, as if, it tries to fill the absence. *The Ancient Mariner* is not merely the upshot of the subliminal stirrings and the romantic imagination; rather it gathers its constructive energy by recollecting of its own volition and multiple myriad remembered images.

I do fully agree with Richard Holmes's view that 'the Mariner's sufferings are expressive of Coleridge's opium addiction and his moral collapse' (Holmes 86). Coleridge often suggests that his diseased body and suffering from numerous complaints causes his dreams and is intimately involved in many dreaming process; hence, we can perceive that his memory was the linking faculty between the psychological and physical states of dreaming and disease. Disease and illness are such conditions when the body is diseased by memory of past events, delirious visions and dreams. I think, Coleridge's memory is poetic, biological and medical. To my mind, during the creative process of *The Ancient Mariner*, Coleridge's memory brings all organs together somatically as well as psychosomatically, and plays the most important role in uniting his dreams, disease, opium visions, imagination and painful remembrances. We can conclude this study by asserting that on the part of Coleridge, not only the instances

of illness and diseases are carried/ revived by the memory ("memory of disease": memory of Coleridge's physical illness), but memories are carried/ associated with the diseases also ("disease of memory": Coleridge's diseased dream memories).

Footnote:

[1] Henceforward I will use only *The Ancient Mariner* instead of the full name *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.
[2] Molly Lefebure explains this in the context of Coleridge's guilt-ridden opium-dreams in her book *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A Bondage of Opium*. See Works Cited.

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Quest for Self-Realisation in Nissim Ezekiel's Poetry

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Abstract

Indian English Poetry is the oldest form of Indian English Literature. Indian poets writing in English have succeeded to nativize and indianize. English in order to reveal typical Indian situations. Henry Louis vivion Derozio is considered the first poet in the lineage of Indian English poetry followed by Sri Aurobindo, Sarojini Naidu, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Toru Dutt among others. Among the contemporary Indian English Poets, Nar Deo Sharma occupies important place because of his literary achievements.

Nissim Ezekiel is considered to be a pioneering figure in Modern Indian English Poetry. His first book, A Time to Change was published in 1952. The significant poets of the post-Derozio and Pre-Ezekiel times are Toru Dutt, Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Sarojini Naidu and Rabindranath Tagore. Some of the notable poets of Ezebiel's time are A.K. Ramanujan, R. Parthasarathy, Gieve Patel, Jayant Mahapatra, Dom Moraes, Kamala Das, Keki N. Daruwalla, Arvind Krishna, Mehrotra, Shiv K. Kumar, Arun Kolatkas and Dillip Chitre.

Keywords: spiritual, self-realisation, formidable, indispensable, broods

Introduction

Indian poetry and Indian literature in general, has a long history dating back to Vedic times. They were written in various Indian languages such as Vedic Sanskrit, Classical Sanskrit, Hindi, Oriya, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Bengali and Urdu. Poetry in foreign languages such as Persian and English also has a strong influence on Indian poetry. The poetry reflects diverse spiritual traditions within India. In particular, many Indian poets have been inspired by mystical experiences. Poetry is the oldest form of literature and has a rich written and oral tradition.

It is generally believed that Indian poetry in English, having passed the phase of imitation and national self-conscioiusness has attained maturity through independence and individuality. This self-consciousness and awareness has played an important role in the writing of modern Indian poetry in English. Nissim Ezekiel, a widely known contemporary poet of India has strived hard to adhere to the principle of self-awareness in his famous book *Collected Poems* 1952-88. Commenting about the quest for self in Ezekiel's poetry, Gieve Patel observes in the introduction : in Ezekiel's poetry. Gieve Patel observes in the Introduction :-

> When he writes his poetry he teaches,
> This time largely himself. In all these
> Contexts the pedagogic tone in relieved,
> even subverted by self-directed irony,
> suddued passion, and simple, direct concern
> for what's at hand."[1]

In spite of this, one has reasons to believe that Ezekiel's quest for self-realisation has become the underlying theme of his poetry and can be perceived n the several poems included in the significant volume *Collected Poems* 1952-1988. Though poems specially included in his Collected Poems, first *A Time to Change* (1952) has a clear concern with spirituality and self realization and *Hymns in Darkness* (1976) and Latter *Day-Psalms* (1982) are also the best example of this theme. The marvelous poems such as "The Egoist's Prayers", or "Hymns in Darkness" from *Hymns in Darkness* are ironic exposes of the self-deceptions of modern day seeker and their concern is not directly with the mystical experience. The poem "Latter Day Psalms" based on the poet's reading from the psalms, is also concerned partly with the poet's experience of self-realisation.

However, Ezekiel's first volume of verse included in *Collected Poems* 1952-88, A *Time of Change* most directly addresses the poet's quest for self-realisation but it is uncertain whether the poet ultimately attains his goal or not. Unlike the other mystics who are fully realized one's impression of Ezekiel is of a serious, though wavering commitment, which is yet not fully realized. But his quest for self-realisation is seen most obviously in the poem "Something to Pursue." What he seeks is nothing but high endeavour:

> "With intensities
> of feeling and of thought,
> That I may see myself
> No longer unresolved
> But definite as morning,

Moving to fruition
When the season comes."?

He is a 'man aspiring to the Good, which may be God' and the answer to his quest lies somewhere in the unique poem "Prayer and Poetry, Poetry and Prayer." Here the poet is trying to attain a way of life through poetry emerging from the heart and something more beyond this:-

"A man may follow it
Through works or poetry,
From works to poetry
Or from poetry to something else." (C.P., P. 14)

The poet pursues passionately nothing but 'this lucid utternance, of unambiguous speech' and the 'limpid style of life, whose texture is poetry. Ezekiel like Dom Moraes is not accepting God as it is but contemplating about Him, and as he points out in "*A Time of Change*" the title poem that "practicing a singing and a talking voice. Is all the creed a man of God requires" or as he aspires in the middle of the poem:

The pure invention or the perfect poem,
Precise communication of a thought,
Love reciprocated to a quiver,
Flawless doctrines, certainty of God". (C.P. p. 5)

Most of the critics have pointed out that there is an underlying spiritual quest in his poetry. But being an Indian poet, Ezekiel's own judgment about his poetry has become the chief characteristics of his personality where on can get a glimpse of poet's own self-conviction. As the poet himself describes:

"I am not a religious or even a moral person in any conventional sense. Yet, I've always felt myself to be religious and moral in some sense. The gap between these two statements is the essential sphere of my poetry".[3]

However in *A time to Change* poem after poem, Ezekiel is trying his best to obliterate the obstacles coming all along in the fulfillment of his dreams. The poet's own self-diagnosis can be seen when he describes that he is "corrupted by the things imagined" ("A Time of Change") but in the important poem "The Double Horror":

"I am corrupted by the world, continually

Reduced to something less than human by the crowd.

Ezekiel's striving to become a finished man compels him to the self-analysis and introspection we come across in some of this poems. For instance in the poem "The Warm", seeing a warm crawling blindly to a drier spot after the rain, he speculates:-

"Oh God! To think that I
By such absurd and devious routes should reach
My destination. I there anywhere
A warm blinder than I have been." (C.P., p. 10)

But in "Words in a Gentle Wind", he comes to know "The empty zone within" and in "Commitment", "I am reduced/ To appetites and godlessness." Keeping in view this characteristic of Ezekiel, Makarand R. Paranjape beautifully remarks that "such relentless self-scrutiny and castigation continues unabated through the other collection as well. Hence, the obstacles in the way of the poet's self-realisation, in his own eyes seem formidable."[4]

Expanding his poetic sensibility, Ezekiel at the end of his volume, *A Time to Change* comes to final resolution. The last two poems "Declaration" and "Encounter" suggest a transformation similar to the mystical experience in which the poet ultimately understands the meaning of life. For instance:

And took, the liberation! The poise of
Being one with God, the precious quietude
Of blood, the aftermath of bold acceptance!

Intimation of some final good comes in
Surrender: waiting instead of seeking
Wanting nothing, being nothing, like a
Crab or Kingfisher by the water, in the
Sun, and lighted up within. (C.P. p. 34)

Here it seems that the poet does not surrender completely, attaining the "poise of being one with God" and the impact of this clear realization can be seen in the rest of his poetry. In the last poem of this volume "Encounter" too some illuminating experiences are vigorously suggested: The poet realizes that the question itself suggests the answer, that it is not always necessary to ask questions. An old pattern of the mind is broken. A mystery is divulged in the answer of the unknown converser, simply life, merge with its rhythm. The key seems to be in

ever-moving, flowing with life, taking refuse only in "living images", not clinging to dead or fossilized ideas of yesterday. Wordsworth finally comprehends that the sole aim of life is to live harmoniously with the universe and to being one with its eternal laws.

Moreover, in *A Time of Change* Ezekiel is concerned with morality in life, and other burning issues of the day haunt him without end. The journey of the "Self becomes a metaphor in his poetry is further carried to its logical conclusion in his subsequent book of verse, The Third and *Hymns in Darkness*. Ezekiel has learnt from W.B. Yeats how to compose poems about the self while keeping away from it. In *The Third*, he takes the stance of a detached observer and discusses personal emotions and conduct intellectually in obstructions. For instance the poem "Portrait" in *The Third* presents the predicament of the modern man including the poet himself.

"Beneath his daily strategy,
Reflected in his suffering face
I see his dim identity,
A small, deserted, holy place. (C.P. p. 87)

Ezekiel's quest for realization seems to be diffident but recollecting his own poetic talent he becomes successful in discovering the truth whether about himself or about others which is his objective. He really believes that:-

"Myself examined frightens me…
I have long watched myself
… … … …
I have heard the endless silent dialogue
Between the self-protective self
And the self naked"
("What Frightens me, "C.P., p. 106)

But in his second phase of self-realisation Ezekiel's doubt and ambivalence of early poetry constitute elements of his later knowledge because his poetry, through variations, repetitions and the increasingly open-ended nature of his vision, becomes a record of the growth of a mind acquiring a more complex and inclusive knowledge. His most recent work *Hymns in Darkness* is a poetry of process and growth blending reason and intuition. Most of the poems of this volume are simple, direct intensely evocative and self-satisfying. The poet does not tell us about the nature of readers he writes for. But he is certainly 'a man speaking to men'.

His railway clerk opens his heart to the reader and speaks in the tone of great intimacy: for instance:

"I am never neglecting my responsibility,
I am discharging it properly .
I am doing my duty,
but who is appreciating?
Nobody, I am telling you". (C.P., p. 184)

Ezekiel is a philosophical poet and proceeds systematically in the treatment of his subject. Like Chaucer, in the famous poem "Guru", for instance, he tells about a saint, sketches the inward story of the man, and finally strikes a deep note. How philosophically, the poet broods over the lot of modern human beings:-

If saints are like this
What hope is there then for us?" (C.P. p. 192)

Ezekiel is a great love-poet and in his poetry he has dealt with his own awareness about the love relationship. The marvelous lyric "poem of the Separation" included in *Hymns in Darkness* shows greater detachment and maturity than the lyrics of the earlier volume. While comparing the reaction in the lover's life with the blast of a bomb, the poet becomes introspective and remembers his beloved who has broken with him.

To judge by memory alone
Our love was happy
When the bombs burst in Kashmir,
My life had burst
And merged in yours." (C.P., p. 195)

Ezekiel's poetic talent is perhaps at its best; his tour be force being the disanuing irony. The way information about pictures in a book reaches the poet is meaningful. It is an amusing situation when poet speaks in the beginning of the poem:

"My daughter tells my wife
Who tells my mother
Who tells me." (C.P. , p. 200)

Ezekiel's appeal is for a growing knowledge which can make of his place an 'environment'. The environment in which he lives, has a genuine meaning for him. India becomes somewhere to reduce to survive, where he is not imprisoned by time, place or idea. The poet in the verse "The Egoist's Progus" advocates that India is indispensable for him:

"Confiscate my passport lord,
I don't want to go abroad
Let me find my say
Where I belong." (C.P., p 213)

However, Ezekiel's poetry revels his primary concern with understanding of the meaning of his life and attaining self-realisation. Poetry seems to be the means to his goal. In the process of pursuing his quest, he is acutely conscious of his own failings and self-deceptions, yet he finds himself preserved frequently. No other poet than Ezekiel has felt ultimately the secret truth of restoration of the soul while confessing about the path of self-righteousness in the latest poem "Latter Day Psalms" where poet seems to be contented by his achievement and scrutiny of the sole self-realisation.

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The Fall Retold: A Close-Reading of Jayanta Mahapatra's Short Story 'and Under the Casuarinas' in Light of Trauma-Literary Theory

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Abstract

The Fall, as The Bible suggests, is an event that induces trauma for mankind. It starts from eating the fruit of knowledge. Therefore, knowing is fatal. Jayanta Mahapatra's short story "And Under the Casuarinas" has located this issue of Fall within a mundane experience of a couple. The couple fails to keep a stable relationship because the husband has a pre-marital relationship which he does not divulge with his wife. The story situates them one day in a sea-beach which reflects the contours of the ambience of the mythical Garden of Eden. The wife presses for the truth. Her insistence and the intriguing nature of the mystifying surrounding break down all his resistance and he discloses his premarital affair to her. The disclosure has been traumatic for both of them. The husband loses his secret love forever and the wife her trust in her husband. But this traumatic experience is all too fleeting because both of them return to a state of reconciliation after the wife forgives him. The story in the end, echoes the supreme virtue of remaining united before crisis of separation that the Bible has taught Adam and Eve before the Fall. The trauma of the story is structural, from the perspective of trauma-literary theory and lyrical from the perspective of the form. But Mahapatra's special art has lifted the traumatic experience to the mystical and epical.

Key Words:

When Adam, following his wife Eve, ate the fruit of the tree of knowledge, he completed a process which had a far-reaching significance to the history of the Western Christian culture. "Man's first disobedience" (line 1), as Milton would later call it, is also the beginning of human history on earth, at least from the point of view of the Christianized Western culture.

The eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge was forbidden by divine injunction. Despite that, they ate it. The consequence of this was terrible and to understand it better we may best go back to the Genesis-episode of the Old Testament of the Bible.

> Yahweh God took Man and placed him in the garden of Eden….gave an order to Man saying, "You may eat of every tree in the garden, but of the tree of the Knoweledge of Good and Evil, you will not eat, for on the day you eat of it, you will die."…The Serpent said to the woman, "You will not die, but God knows that the day you eat it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, knowing good and evil.
>
> The woman saw that the fruit was good to eat, and pleasant to the eyes, and ideal for gaining knowledge. She took its fruit and ate it and gave some to her husband who was with her. He ate it. Then their eyes were opened and both of them knew they were naked. So they sewed leaves of a fig together and made themselves loincloths. ((9)

What was the spark beneath such audacious and perilous act of transgression? The Bible found three reasons for eating the fruit. The fruit was "good to eat", meaning, the taste of the fruit was assumed to be delicious so that the temptation to eat was hardly resisted. The fruit was also "pleasant to the eyes", meaning, it was ravishingly beautiful and the attraction of beauty could not be overcome. But the most important reason for eating the fruit was perhaps that it was "ideal for gaining knowledge." The tree is the tree of knowledge—knowledge of good and evil. The urge to know something which is not permitted to know is at the heart of human endeavour. Even though the Bible attributes to Satan some sort of responsibility for human tragedy, it is quite clear that Eve, as the Bible attests, was herself attracted by the taste and beauty of the fruit and that she had an irresistible desire to know. Such desires and drives are the main reasons for her eating the fruit.

Adam ate it because he had no other choice. The creation of Eve was done by God by doing a surgical operation on Adam's rib. After this, Adam declares, "Now this is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman because she was taken from man."(*Bible* 9) The Biblical culture never allows Adam to remain free of Eve, to have his own separate and individual choice. Man is not given a separate existence from his wife, "That is why man leaves his father and mother and is attached to his wife, and with her becomes one flesh." (*Bible* 9) According to one interpretation of this practice, despite the Jewish custom required a woman to leave her family in order to enter in her husband's clan, in ancient times the husband was the one who entered into the woman's clan for keeping intact the family milieu in order to establish a new social unity (Bible foot note 9). In Hebrew the idea of one

flesh denotes one single being which the husband and the wife make together. Adam therefore ate the fruit to fortify the providential design of marriage as unity in life.

The eating of the fruit inaugurated the process of divine intervention. As soon as the event took place, God had the immediate cognizance and following His own ordinance, He drove them out of Eden to the world. Milton wrote in *Paradise Lost* that the disobedience "brought death into the world, and all our woe/ With loss of Eden." (lines 3-4) The meaning of the loss of Eden is significant because Eden is not just the site of the apple tree. It is also the site of bliss—the site of perennial joy and happiness. The loss of Eden may be compensated by the acquiring of knowledge, but the bliss that human being has lost perpetually can never be gained back. And it caused serious crisis. Dominick LaCapra, one of the founding figures in the classical trauma theory and trauma-historiography has opined that every new societal paradigm stems from a traumatic rupture that establishes the new culture by replacing the old one. To him, the Judeo-Christian paradigm of the Western world sprang from the myth of the Fall. The Fall of Adam and Eve from Eden stands as the traumatic foundation of Western history. According to him, "In the Old Testament, the fall of Adam and Eve plays this role [of the myth of origin], leaving a legacy of exile, distance from the divine presence, and original sin. In the New Testament, the founding trauma is of course the life and the agonized crucifixion of Christ, on which the devout Christian may be urged to pattern his or her own life (imitation Christi)" (Preface 2014 xii-xiii). Even though knowledge or truth which is the objective of history is gained by such experience, the Fall is a case in which, to borrow the idea from Camus, the journey of man in search for knowledge or truth is just a repetition of trauma without healing. The religious rituals serving as the memory to these traumatic events or experiences never 'work through' the pain; on the contrary they were thought to be perpetuated by such rituals by being consistently and constantly 'acted out.' Such founding trauma generated by the Fall is believed to be alleviated to a certain extent when it is replaced by the Crucifixion—another traumatic event that was, at least form a theological-metaphysical angle, seen as the complementary to the first one. The first trauma is about man's alienation from God and the second about his reunion with Him. It was like a circle that began with a trauma but was brought to closure only by another trauma. The mythical representation of that circular trauma narrative generates a working through of original trauma by an 'acting out' of the secondary trauma. But at the heart of both is the price that the event takes from man in terms of a traumatic experience.

Now trauma, as the etymology of the word suggests, is formed of a Greek term which means 'wound.' Initially identified with a physical scar or injury which causes great disturbance in the whole body, the term entered the vocabulary of psychology, predominantly

because of Freud and his associates during the last decade of the 19th century. Psychologically, trauma denotes a wound that is inflicted to the mind by an overwhelming event. As per the latest trauma-theory, traumatic experience is categorized into two types—historical and structural. The historical trauma is event-based. It is the name of a very serious psychological rupture issuing from a sudden, catastrophic incident. The hugeness and profundity of the event paralyses the mind in such a way that the victim fails to memorize it. The event comes to his mind later through hallucinations and nightmares. The theorization of this trauma has been done by such critics as Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, Geoffrey Hartman etc. This view of trauma has been challenged and extended by a recent group of critics who hold that even the day-to-day crisis may induce traumatic impression on the mind. This type of trauma is known as structural trauma and it is theorized by critics like Ruth Leys, Stef Craps, Michael Rothberg etc. This type of trauma is inflicted to the mind by social structure. Rape, harassment, betrayal and such prolonged events as colonization and racial discrimination can present situations which may produce traumatic experience to the individuals and groups. The short story which we are discussing here deals with a traumatic situation which belongs to the type of structural trauma. But the writer reads this event of structural trauma in terms of a mythical traumatic incident. To speak it more clearly, the writer shows how a historical or mythical traumatic incident shapes the form of an event that is structural.

Jayanta Mahapatra, the legendary Indian poet writing in English, was born to a Christian family of Cuttack and brought up in the town's predominantly Hindu ambience. His literary endeavour is marked by a quest for identity. He pursued this quest by relating himself to and examining the myths and historical events of Orissa's past and present. The familial Christian background often leads him to the exploration of the Christian theological and metaphysical issues as his Hindu surrounding makes him brood over the Hindu mythology as well. Beside being a prolific poet, Mahapatra has a volume of short stories written in English. The volume named as The Green Gardener has eighteen stories. The short story which will be the focus of our debate here is entitled as "And Under the Casuarinas".

Jayanta Mahapatra's volume of short stories has received very little critical attention. Reviewed by a few critics the stories are analysed mostly from the stylistic point of view. Gurga Prasad Panda, an Indian reviewer, has found in Mahapatra's stories a "real poet's prose" and praises him because "Mahapatra, in his stories takes us through a terrain of events and experiences which has shaped his persona and hence, one finds almost all stories have autobiographical overtones"(199) According to A. L.McLeod, on the other hand has an utterly negative view of the volume. According to him, "The eighteen stories in the collection are almost all too short to create characters, atmospheres, philosophical points, or suspense"

(214). Praised or dismissed, the reviews and studies on the volume have done one common thing—they have scarcely referred to the story, "And Under the Casuarinas". Besides that, they have found the stories prose and plot wanting. But they fail to realize that Jayanta Mahapatra is not concerned about a well-knit plot in his stories. His concern is to catch a particular character in a critical moment and to analyse the working of the mind. The stories are all replete with traumatic experience and the pattern of trauma narrative never settles into a well-ordered, linear kind of plot. So expecting from Mahapatra a well-ordered plot is to completely ignore the aspect of his strength and his preoccupation.

The story in discussion here hinges on the issue of pre-marital affair and its traumatic impact upon the relationship in marriage. The protagonist had a love-affair with a woman called Lulu before he married another woman. But he has not disclosed it to her in detail. He has kept the event secret within himself—the event of his relationship with Lulu that produces the feelings of both bliss and sadness. Now the story takes him along with his wife and child to a spot on the sea-beach and here the trauma begins.

The sea-beach provides the characters with a highly sensitive ambience. The husband has sat with the wife "sprawled on the sand"(17), indicating a relaxed and meditative mood. "The sea breeze runs against his body like a fever." It is evening and it is "slowly climbing into the air, smelling of unknown places." The sea-waves 'come rushing towards him, arms spread out, then crick down to his feet, defeated." The tall casuarinas, on the beach, with their green fronds, dark and unreal deepen the romantic mood. It is the time that offers possibility of something strange and unprecedented to happen. It is in fact the time when one can accomplish what has been so far left undone.

Now this ambience is connected by the author to the trauma of the Fall. The casuarinas are like the mythical tree of knowledge forming the background of the cosmic drama. The apple, referred to in this part of the story, is the mythical fruit of the forbidden tree whose invocation reminds us about the story's attempt to link itself to the myth of the Fall. The sea is shown as 'a sensuous snake', the mythical Satan who beguiles Eve in the disguise of a snake into eating the apple and paves the way for their exile from the Garden of Eden. Beside the wife has been referred to as a happy woman, quivering, reminding us that the author may be thinking her as Eve-like and her happiness does suggest that she is in a wonderful world like Eden. The text completes its biblical texture by bringing the reference of Eden directly.

But the man knows that the time has come when he has to face the eventuality of the fall form bliss---"Out of Eden eventually." He has sensed that his hidden relationship with Lulu symbolized by the apple is going to be 'blasted'. He is decidedly sad, not just now, but probably from he had started his married life. The wife does not know it but may have sensed

it by finding him wearing a melancholy visage. Therefore she insists, "You don't tell me half of what I said. You never tell me anything." The husband seems to be deaf to these entreaties because he fails to muster enough courage to tell her of 'his secret grief'(18). He might have come with Lulu to this place earlier but now he does not remember this. But as soon as he notices the ambience in detail and as he is constantly pricked by his wife to disclose his past, he remembers it. This is apparent from the fact that the story in the beginning says, "The first time he recalls, he hadn't noticed the casuarinas at all"(17). Then the story speaks of the air, "smelling of unknown places". And few lines later, the story asserts, "And he remembers the first time, under the trees"(18). What he remembers is something to assume. But it is quite clear that his pre-marital affair with Lulu which remains somewhere in his memory comes back to him alive, thanks to the ambience in which he is now. The place is the reminder of the past event forgotten. And this is traumatic because according to Freud, trauma is actually the remembering of things past. That trauma is mostly unrepresentable is evident here when the story speaks that he 'remembers' not specifying the object of remembrance. He is "pulled away from her by the pattern of the earth, the innocent gestures of leaf and sounding breeze" (18). He is in fact remembering of his past love, "his other human love" (19), as the story says.

His wife on the contrary loves him very much. She is very much dependent on him. She says, "You will not know how lonely I was. Before you married me, I mean"(18). She wants to see him happy. "You are all I have, you know," She assures him. She wants to form a stable, communicable relationship with him---"She opens as a seed, trying to put down roots." But she finds a secret grief in his face causing a rift between them, making it impossible to forge a genuine relationship with him. She wants her husband to come out it. She wants him to speak out, even though that may bring a different trouble for her. She repeats, "Tell me what I do not wish to hear. Push me into the age-old well, let me feel the terror again of falling in. Leave me my hurt, your secret grief, your human love."

She too, like her husband, finds the ambience congenial for healing the wound. The darkness of the ambience has "made it easier for her" to cajole him and draw out of him the root of all maladies. He finds 'Her words are warm." It is as if "a glacier of love has begun to move over him, by inches," and he is "covered up" under it. But he is still "unable to say a word." The wife now helps him by providing him a clue, helping him to remember and speak out---"I'd heard there was someone you loved. Was she beautiful? You could have, had you wished, I suppose.." The husband realizes that if he does not disclose the hidden truth now, it will probably wreck her. The immensity of pain in her has made her "a fragile flower." He being the husband has to be "the bowl, holding the fruit, the warm convex body of her fears leaning against him." He considers this moment as "the right one" for the "betrayal'" with his

former beloved. Almost echoing what Adam says before the Fall, he tells himself "When one and one are one, there should be no secrets between one another.... It was their own body." Even though in her insistence, the wife plays the role of Eve, since it was Eve who first ate the fruit, he cannot forsake her. They have to remain united in their journey of life and he has decided.

His decision means his loss of the private world, the Eden he has kept secret so far---"The walls of his private house are tumbling down last of all, the tiles resting upon the warped roof beams"(19). His decision means his loss of Lulu---"A girl steps into the open. Lulu, her great black eyes pleading with him through the mist of her pain, not to push her outside him, not to leave her beyond the final circle which he draws in the dust."

The moment of truth-telling is painful for her. As he goes onto disclose the truth, she becomes "immobile." Her "soft muscles stiffen." The trauma is apparent in her. The husband senses that she is "holding her breath, waiting for the bruises of his words." "The intangible casuarinas stare at her" and it is clear to her that *knowing* the secret of her husband is like a traumatic experience that will haunt her all her life---"Something has been born within her, something which would never die, for the space of her days'

The terrible event happens. "He tells her every bit. The fifty-nine letters he had written crammed with longing and nakedness and his love." The narrator, like Milton, introduces a pathetic fallacy to describe the immediate consequence of this disclosure in terms of a natural calamity—"The earth contracts, cracks in the cruel cold." The fall begins.

The shock that the truth generates is as traumatic as that in Genesis. The shock has made them aware of their fleshly nakedness as it happened to Adam and Eve. The Bible says, "Then [after eating the fruit] their eyes were opened and both of them knew they were naked" (9). The narrator in the story gives us a similar sort of picture.

> "That first time, when he revealed himself, the movement of the bone beneath trusting flesh. *Why do we need to take off our Sunday clothes*? Trying each other out, the unending manoeuvre. And then standing face to face groping in the harsh light, to discover that *they are mere bodies*, their familiar faces missing, no longer there. Thick, grown masses of emotion.

The event has brought a wall in between their relationship. He wants to bring forward some consolatory self-justification—'I've told you all. What you have heard, and what you did not hear. I could have lied, darling, and you would never have known, and cradled all the lies and called this your love"(20). And he is almost repentant—"Forgive me, if you can"

But the wall remains as is evident from the words of the wife---"I wish I hadn't asked you about it." The disclosure, like the eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, has brought trauma for them. The disclosure has brought then down from Eden—the husband lost

his Lulu, the wife lost her trust in him. The husband too thinks like his wife—probably he could have tried to quench the curiosity of his wife about his past with a lie, because now it appears to be evident, "Where love lies, lies love." The pursuit of the truth is fatal, as the Bible has already demonstrated. Therefore, "A lie could be the life of love. To cauterize, healing wound with wound."

The story ends almost symbolically. Returning to hotel, the wife suddenly feels something crawling on her back. She pleads him to remove it and almost unconsciously he starts undressing her. The full naked body of the wife, now purged of the shock of knowing the truth, stands before him "fluidlike in subdued grief." And he, caressing her, sees her patting him "charitably on the head." The trauma evaporates by the note of forgiveness and with forgiveness comes reconciliation.

All of Jayanta Mahapatra's short stories are brilliant pieces of mood-exploration. Most of them are like extended lyrics. But in this particular story, the trauma of both the husband and wife move beyond their common mournful posture to reach a profound height because of the writer's powerful rendering of this tale under the rubric of a grand foundational traumatic myth. The lyrical short story touches the epic height by the profundity of emotional turmoil.

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English through Literature in Collaborative Classroom

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Abstract

Teaching language with the help of literature is a Classical Paradigm. In India and other Asian countries, teaching literature remains at the centre to learn the English language. This paper focuses on how literature works to improve language competence in Collaborative Classroom. Collaborative learning is combination of educational, linguistic, philosophical, social and psychological approaches to learning. In Collaborative learning, the teacher can train students to activities that involve memory, thinking, and understanding of how and when to use their knowledge. Through collaborative teaching, teachers can lead students to complete their given task by working together in groups. Working collaboratively can improve both language and communicative competence. Collaborative learning teacher teaches skills, rather than just data. As a result, active learning and self-learning are nurtured in English classroom. Students eventually learn the craft of interdependence and independence. Collaborative learning can be a major solution for problems relating to mixed ability classroom or to the classroom with different proximal development. It helps the learners acquire both foundational and non-foundational skills. The paper concludes with a few literary evidence, collaborative classroom experiment and experience.

Keywords: Collaborative Learning, skills, active learning, cognitive entity and social skills, foundational, non foundational etc.

Teaching literature to learn a language is a classical paradigm in teaching a foreign or second language. European Classical languages, mainly Greek and Italy, used its literature to improve competence in language. Classicists also believed that studying the culture and thought expressed in writing could bring competence to use the second language. In fact, teaching literature to learn English language still occupies the centre in most Indian classrooms. It is because of the demand in large range of English users and usages. At the same time, there are language teachers who pay attention to the needs of learners. As a result, there are a few changes in the structure of language teaching in educational institutions that bring debates and values in ancient mode of teaching literature to learn a language. Billows, Carter and Long, McRae, Duff and many more linguists added that literary texts are efficient material as they involve readers emotionally into the text, provide multiple interpretations ready for discussion, and enable them understand cultural code and language patterns.

Collaborative learning is an educational approach where two or more learners work together on a specific knowledge of task**.** Collaborative learning (CL) is more social as it involves learners to work, converse, share learning and learning experience with their peers. CL is philosophical in approach as students learn better by understanding and helping their peers learn. Collaborative learning can also be defined as a psychological approach as it involves how learning together shape and effect theirs attitude of learning and living in life both professionally and personally. Harvard Medical School is the first institution that introduced a collaborative program named "New Pathways Program" for the first year medical students. The programme teamed students of 6 to 8 in number as a group, to come with solution for diagnostic program clinically. They are allowed to get help from Harvard Medical School professionals and resources. Students should identify the problem and diagnose patience by collaborating with peers. The program concluded:

> Diagnostic judgement and collaborative skills are the capacities that the New Pathways Program tries to develop in young physician. Indeed, the larger educational importance of collaborative learning is that it makes capable intellectual interdependence- that is, social maturity integrated with intellectual maturity – may be most important lesson students should be attend to learn. (Bruffee 2)

The same kind of practice still remains in practice all over the world over several decades. Thus, it holds a fixed place over the test of time. Even though CL entered with field of Medicine and Sciences, it was flourished in the USA in the field of language studies in colleges and universities. Therefore, Collaborative learning is an educational**,** linguistic, philosophical, social and psychological approach to learning. There are many definitions

available to define CL, but they are all based on some of the basic assumptions about learning and learners. It includes, learning is active process rather than staying passive in the classroom, learning relay on rich context involving activities with an opportunity to apply one's idea and learners are diverse, that is, with different educational background, culture, experience, proximal development and so on. .

Collaborative Learning promotes activities such as memory, thinking, understanding, using the knowledge – where, when and how. It is more important to know how to use the information than just to know the information. As Alwin Tofler points out,

> Early computers consisted of a "memory" or bank of data, plus a "program" or a set of information that told the machine how to manipulate the data. New generation computers now not only store greater masses of data, but multiple programs, so that the operator can apply a variety of programs to the same database. Such systems also requires a "master program" that, in effect, tells the machine which program to apply and when. The multiplication and addition of a master program vastly increased the power of the computer. (Future Shock, 414)

A Similar strategy can be used to enhance human adaptability. It helps students to move from passive listeners to active participants. In CL, advanced students can help their peers to learn. The primary aim of CL classroom is competency (language and communication) than just knowledge. Language competency can mean grammatical competency, the ability to use language error free and recognise correct sentences. Communicative competency is the ability to use language appropriately that concentrates on communicating the message and not on errors. As they practice to use language when they converse with their peers, it can bring communicative competence in them. It gives teacher an opportunity to monitor groups and students individually where teacher can engage remedial teaching, As a result, both language and communicative competence can be focused in CL.

Students in group depend on each other to complete the given task. At the same time, they can contribute individually to the team. Students own and share responsibility in CL. Bruffee advocates that how one owns one's own authority on other and accepting other's authority on them. Initially, there can be hesitations to show one's authority and accepting the same. In fact, collaborative teacher too initially may question themselves whether they are working for what they are paid for and the same may rise from their peers, institutions, students and parents. But once students learn the art of conversation (consensus and negotiation), they develop the craft of independence and interdependence.

One of the major challenges faced by the teacher all over the world is a classroom with diverse students. They possess different proximal development, cultural code, educational background, beliefs and learning style. For example, the average and above

average students understand and learn, whereas below average students are challenged in classroom all the time. Thus, they lose self motivation and self interest in learning language. Collaborative classroom provides attention to all students. It helps to improve the cognitive entity and social skills. In other words, Collaborative class provides both foundational (what teacher gives them) and non-foundational knowledge (what they learn by themselves).

Bruffee's Collaborative Classroom involves four stages.

1. The teacher has to divide students into small groups.

2. Students are provided with open ended tasks, so they can arrive at consensus and negotiate among them. (The collaborative task can sometimes involve close ended questions in situation where it involves reader to study the text deeply for accurate details and also based on student's proximal development. Students can make use of books, access dictionary and discuss with their friends in the group).

3. To hear and check the reports from all the groups and negotiates among them.

4. The teacher must study the quality of task the students have done collaboratively.

Based on Henry S. Kienner collaborative task, a task can be initiated with a brief lecture on how to collaborate and work together. A copy of literary text can be the focus of learning that includes questions and tasks based on students' proximal development, resulting the group to move to consensus in group as the work together to give answer as a whole. One member from each group represents the answers/writing by presenting/writing on board or in form of presentation and with conversation to other groups. Even, a teacher or student can do it. At any time, the teacher has authority to add their points to the students. Wienner stressed the role of collaborative teacher during activities (task):

> Most teachers I have observed travel from group to group answering questions from students, participating in discussion, probing with further questions, guiding response and focusing students' attention on the task. Although some of steps may be necessary from time to time, the teacher's presence as a group member challenges one of the basic tents of collaboration in the classroom. (57)

Here is a sample of task from collaborative classroom conducted in a class of II year UG students. The text taken for collaborative task is "A Day's Wait*"* by Ernest Hemingway, a short story published in 1933. The story is about a nine year old boy named Schatz who is sick during a cold winter. As the boy suffers from flu, a doctor is called in. The doctor informs the boy's father that his temperature is 102 degrees Fahrenheit and recommends three different medicines. The boy is depressed and finally he inquires his father that when he will die. He thinks that a 102 degree temperature is lethal as he heard from his friends (from France where Celsius is used) that one cannot live beyond 44 degrees temperature. He feels

relaxed after his father's explanation about the differences in two scales, Fahrenheit and Celsius. The story focuses the boy's misunderstanding leading to many changes in his own mind and the problems due to communication gap.

There were 40 students and grouped into seven teams. Initially, they listened to a general instruction on how to collaborate to complete the task such as how to share work, to ask for help and to provide help to their peers in the group. Then, the task sheets were provided that was designed in two levels based on student's proximal zone. Level A was the set of question for below average and average level students, which was designed in order to help them to read, understand, and interpret the text collaboratively. Level B was a set of questions for average and above average, which was designed to make them learn beyond the text that included critical thinking, parallel reading, and creative writing. In fact, it is important how they learn language when they collaborate with the help of text and task. Finally, the entire class shared their questions and answers orally or in writing (on the blackboard).

After general instruction, the students were encouraged to read the text individually for 20 to 25 minutes without any help from their friends in the group, and later they were encouraged to discuss with each other if there was any difficulty in interpretation or understanding the text. Individual reading was promoted in order to make the students feel independent in their work. Discussion on the text was allowed for 5 Minutes in order to make the students discuss their learning , clarification and doubts regarding the interpretation of the text. The above shift from reading individually to collaboratively provides them an opportunity to be an independent reader and interdependent peer.

Though students were hesitant initially, they became more and more interested in reading the text though hesitated initially. Among eight teams, three were given Level B task sheets based on at least one advantaged student in the group. The remaining four groups were given Level A task sheets as there were no advantaged students in the group. Their interest to complete the task is also visible. They were provided the task sheets and instructed that one member in each team could read the task to their peers in the group. Because listening to others is important thing to collaborate. For the first few questions, they clarified their answers before writing the answers in their task sheet. A few groups wrote using pencils or wrote in their rough notes and copied it in sheets after clarification. It showed that they were felt hesitated to go with their answers by their own reading with their peers. In fact, it conveyed that there was definite hesitation to writing whether it was task sheets or exams. It is the duty of the collaborative teacher to make the students feel confident to write their own answers after discussion with their friends in the group. Collaborative learning can achieve it full success when the authority of learning is shifted from the teacher to the learner. So, it

was given to the students to decide the answer by negotiating among their friends. The role of collaborative teacher is to monitor each group, clarify, and help the teams if necessary.

On monitoring their collaborative writing, it was identified that students had read the text. But the problem lay when they transformed their understanding of text into writing. For example, to a question in level A, "What is Epidemic?" one of the groups answered "Epidemic is a kind of flu disease. And there was no dangerous if you avoided pneumonia." As they were encouraged to use books and dictionary if needed, they copied the line "This was a light epidemic of flu and there was no danger if you avoided pneumonia." from the text for the answer. It shows that they had no practice to write by themselves. They were asked to rewrite by their own language. Grammatical, punctuation errors were pointed out to make them conscious in their writing. At the same time, pointing out too many mistakes may disappoint student to write further. In collaborative learning, how students collaborate better in order to learn competency in English is important and every answer out of their collaboration is a welcome sign.

Of the seven groups, two groups completed the task sheets in time. Other five groups left few unanswered question due to delay to copy from their notebooks. Even though they were encouraged to write answers, they waited for teacher's approval for their answers. Of two groups who had completed their task sheets, one group had advantaged student; but the other group had no advantaged student in the group. It is evident that it is not important to have an advantaged student in the group to collaborate better. It is all about positivity, self motivation and less hesitation that helped teams to work better collaboratively. Finally, they shared their few tasks on the board and few orally. There was some kind of consensus within collaborative group and classroom regarding a question from the task - "Keeping the pain and suffering within you is brave! Add your points relating to the boy in 'A Day's Wait'." The Students shared different opinion (agreement and agree to disagreement with various viewpoint) regarding the above question. They finally added all the possible points to the answer.

Therefore, students learned the craft of independence and interdependence along with language through reading text individually, collaboratively, sharing the ideas orally within the group, writing collaboratively for the task and sharing their writing with their friends. Thus, the whole class collaborates by sharing their learning and sharing by teaching to their peers in the group and to the whole class.

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Regeneration in U. R Anantha Murthy's *Samskara:* A Journey towards a Self in a Class and Caste Ridden Society

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Abstract

U. R. Anantha Murthy's novel Samskara or A Rite for a Dead Man is chiefly concerned with the rituals, caste, religion, clan and social exploitation. The writer here presents two major characters who stand foil to each other. While Naranappa spends his entire life to shatter the dogma of a rigid society, Acharya fights a battle against the boisterous conduct of the rebel only to uphold the spirit of brahminism. Finally after Naranappa's death, Acharya comes to realize the vacuity of religious practices which ought to be followed up without any significance. This sort of comprehension is made possible through his physical relationship with Chandri. Thus here all three major characters get transformation with the passage of time- Naranappa dies without his point of view being justified,; Acharya develops a keen interest to human body, mind as well as all to natural beauty; Chandri gets alteration in coming in close contact with a pure soul like Acharya.

Key Words: Hinduism, Culture, Class, Caste, Spiritual Transformation

Samskara or A Rite for a Dead Man, a universally acclaimed novel in the sky of Indian English writing, is a gift from U. R. Anantha Murthy. Later the novel was turned into the

award-winning film in 1970 and translated into English from Kannada by the Indian poet and essayist A. K. Ramanujan in 1976. Based on the cultural milieu of a traditional decaying Brahmin society the novel explores social dilemma, exploitation of the working- class women especially the prostitutes, rituals of a dogmatic Brahmin society and most significantly, a journey towards self realization of a man burdened under sham religious practices of *shastra*. Being autobiographical in nature it represents a bleak dystopian portrayal of Thirthahalli taluk in Shimoga district of Karnataka where Anantha Murthy was born and brought up in an orthodox Brahmin family. Sura P. Rath precisely depicts the intersection between the theme of the novel and its co-related issues thus:

> As a religious novel about a decaying Brahmin colony in the South Indian village of Karnataka, *Samskara* serves as an allegory rich in realistic detail, a contemporary reworking of ancient Hindu themes and myths, and a serious, poetic study of a religious man living in a community of priests gone to seed. A death, which stands as the central event in the plot, brings in its wake a plague, many more deaths, live questions with only dead answers, moral chaos, and a rebirth of one man. (4)

The novels written in Kannada show a sharp social reality; *Samskara* is not an exception to this. It explores a community of persons who are bound in a complex web of caste, culture, religion and social taboos. On the surface level, it deals with the cremation of brahmin's body but on a broader aspect it exposes the greed, hypocrisy, social dilemma, exploitation of women and existence of prostitution in South India. Brahmins in the novel have been represented to plunge into several immoral practices. To support their conduct lawful they often refer to religious text which promotes *Chaturvaranadharma.* In the ninetieth hymn of the tenth mandala of the *Rig Veda* there is a reference to *Chaturvarnyavavastha* in Hindu society:

> The Brahman was his mouth, of both his arms was the Rajanya made.
> His thighs became the Vaisya, from his feet the Sundra was produced. (Griffith 569)

V. S. Naipaul, a polemical writer of recent trends, describes Anantha Murthy's portrayal of Hindu society in his book *India: A Wounded Civilization* as a dark bleak dystopia*:*

> Knowingly or unknowingly, Anantha Murthy has portrayed a barbaric civilization, where the books, the laws, are buttressed by magic, and where a too elaborate social organization is unquickened by intellect or creativity (except to the self in its climb to salvation). (109)

In Hinduism *atma* or individual soul is a part of *Paramatma* or Absolute Being. Every individual should aspire to achieve *moksha* or liberation from *samsar* or the cycle of life and death. There are three paths of salvation- selfless action (*Karma Yoga),* self-transcending

knowledge (*Janna Yoga),* and devotion (*Bhakti Yoga).* A man through his selfless activities makes himself free from all sorts of desires, fear and anger to achieve *Nirvana* because it is a state of enlightenment. Lord Krishna defines the nature of an enlightened person to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita* in the following way:

> When one is completely free from all desires of the mind and is satisfied with the Supreme Being by the joy of Supreme Being, then one is called an enlightened person, O Arjuna. A person whose mind is unperturbed by sorrow, who does not crave pleasures, and who is completely free from attachment, fear, and anger, is called an enlightened sage of steady intellect. (Srimad Bhagvad Gita,Chapter 2, Verse 55-56)

Praneshacharya, the spiritual leader of the brahmin, pursues a life of indifferent householder and self-enforced celibacy only to get rid of *kama, lobh* and *artha* which may create hindrance on his path of *dharma* or rightful duties. He marries a crippled wife as he thinks a wife like Bhagirathi is an altar where he can sacrifice his carnal desires; his only desire is to get "ripe and ready" for the ultimate salvation. Even the conventional ideology motivates his wife to implore him to go for second marriage, "A house needs a child to make it home. You've had no joy in this marriage" (*Ananthamurthy*1). The relationship between the husband and wife is not of sexual attachment but of a doctor and a patient; he wants how to renounce the world of *maya* living a sacrificial life of a *sanyasi*. Therefore, to him "all earthly fragrances was like the flowers that go only to adorn the god's hair. All female beauty was the beauty of Goddess Lakshmi, queen and servant of Lord Vishnu. All sexual enjoyment was Krishna's when he stole the bathing cowgirls' garments, and left them naked in the water" (76-77). His zeal to keep up self purity following the rituals can be traced through the following lines:

> Chandri was Naranappa's concubine. If Acharya talked to her he would be polluted; he would have to bathe again before his meal. (2)

He does not want to go against the hegemonic culture which "is a calculated exercise of power meant to shape the will of the people in ways which favour the dominant groups" (Satchidanandan 198). Praneshacharya plunges in a kind of moral dilemma when Chandri breaks the news of Naranappa's sudden death. His over-adherence to the root of Brahminism prevents him to come to conclusion how to make *samskara* of the dead body of Naranappa who throughout his life left no stone unturned to defile the sacred threads of brahminism. Naranappa in his life was "a reckless and boisterous Brahmin, consorting with Muslims, prostitutes, and low-caste men and women, and thus he throws a challenge to his community and its leader" (Raval 118). Through his death the entire *agrahara* confronts a crisis- the crisis of faith. Even Praneshacharya, who is an archive of Vedantic learning, has to pore over

the books to find a solution of the problem. Being frustrated with *jyanmarga* he turns into *bhaktimarga* or the path of devotion by offering flowers to Lord Maruti in quest of a solution in the dark forest. Nothing but orthodox brahminism pervades his entire mind. As Suresh Raval in the essay *Cultural Impasse in Samskara* argues:

> Orthodox brahminism is vividly presented in Praneshacharya fruitless search for an answer from the scriptures, and it is made even more simple-mindedly ritualistic and superstitious by his prayers to Lord Maruti for divine intercession. No such miraculous aid is, of course, forthcoming. (117)

The dreary aspect of religion thwarts Praneshacharya and in the dark he suddenly enters into another domain where he recognizes the untrodden aspect of his mind i.e. 'his body's tigerish lust' (8) through the sexual intercourse with Chandri. The brahminic code associated with Acharya gets saggy and he comes to realize lust has overpowered him like any other common men. Chandri gives him food when he was hungry, provides him solace when he is encumbered to find a solution how to cremate a Brahmin's corpse without any heir , and shows off her breasts to be embraced when he leads a barren life with his crippled wife. He approbates the flowers offered by Chandri knowing that he has lost in the boondocks of digressive thoughts. Chandri takes him to a new world of naturalness and wholeness that ought to be in the forest beyond his well known stratified society. In this dark, joyous land Acharya finds a gratification for his five senses; "He gazed, he listened till his eyes were filled with the sights, his ears with the sounds all around him, a formation of fireflies. 'Chandri', he said touched her belly and sat up" (67). But he does not gather the courage to speak up what he has done in the dark world before all those Madhava Brahmins who entrust him with their absolute faith. He candidly confesses to her about his religious fear, "If I don't have the courage to speak, tomorrow you must speak out. I'm ready to do the funeral rites myself. I've no authority to tell any other Brahmin to do them, that's all" (45). Apart from Hinduism Meenakshi Mukherjee in this context relates Acharya's predicament as " the universal problem of a man who has equated himself with a particular role for so long that the role becomes his self, and without the role he feels lost"(84). He is neither ready to abandon Brahminhood nor to accept un-brahminic world-view. He passes through a moral dilemma to rid himself off from playing the role of a 'Crest-Jewel of Vedic Learning'. He loses himself in the maze of diverse thoughts and Chandri in darkness .Being alone with his dying wife in entire agrahara in the midst of overpowering stench, in scorching heat and intolerable hunger he looks back to his past days and contrasts it with the new situation. His old life seems to be ineffectual, evasive and unthriving. After his return from the forest he notices for the first time with terror and disgust his wife's "sunken breast, her bulbul nose, her short narrow braid. All these things which were so familiar even a moment before, all suddenly begin to

change because of his growing abhorrence to his past life; what he wants now is a relief from all these. Critics like Julian Crandall Hollick and Shebana Coelho describe Praneshacharya's dilemma as "a classical conflict between God and Man, duty and desire, virtue and vice" (240).

After the death of his wife Acharya casts himself aside from all the obligations to the agrahara and achieves freedom from the necessity of concentration. His physical contact with Chandri makes him aware of the difference between beauty and ugliness; he craves for Belli's breasts and Chandri 's body and feels disgust for his long ailing wife; out of this sexual encounter a new Praneshacharya is born , redeeming himself from his old life of deprivation. Thus the moment of his sexual union is a sacred moment –"nothing before it, nothing after it. That moment brought into being what never was and then itself went out of being" (97). In search for a meaningful after-life Acharya goes into self imposed exile to find solace from his evasive life. With short passages of time he passes through a various stages-fear, indecisiveness, feeling of vulnerability and an utmost desire to obliterate self-consciousness. Now he is able to think with envy, admiration and amazement how fearlessly Naranappa lived with Chandri in the heart of agrahara while in the same consequence he was ceaselessly haunted with the fear of being discovered. K. V. Tirumalesh in the essay "The Context of Samskara" points out why V. S Naipaul in his book *India: An Wounded Civilization* has depicted Acharya and Mahatma Gandhi as the souls of 'underdeveloped ego', "Thus both Mahatma Gandhi and The Acharya are so totally self-absorbed that in fear of being perceived they perceive nothing '' (78).Acharya remembers how his friend Mahabala gathers the courage to combat against the customs of the brahminism and marries a prostitute. He passes through the wakeful anguish of the soul: "Naranappa, did you go through this agony? Mahabala, did you go through it"? (112). After this transformation when he incessantly searches for the essential and vital importance of personal identity in one's life, he meets Putta, an alter-ego of himself. Being a Brahmin Putta too maintains caste distinction of the community but at the same time his zest for life, naturalness, life-affirming inclusiveness sway a fatherly love in the heart of him. The more he is engendered with doubts, confusions and fear; he decides to return to Durbasapura to cremate a debased dead body and to confess the naked truths before all his devotees. The novel ends but does not conclude: "He will travel, for another four or five hours. Then, after that, what? Praneshacharya waited anxious, expectant" (138). The ambivalence faced by Acharya creating a world of dualism can be summed up in the words of TRS Sharma:

> His self is now a void, for he has been disinvested of the layers of culture, as reified through centuries of observance. He has now envisioned truth in the domain of the body, the sensual which has erased his earlier secure identity. ..He is now a "dangling

> man". Gaining a new identity, or the one, which he can evolve through going back to a different re/source of his culture, is not easy. (133)

The alter ego of Praneshacharya is Naranappa who poses problems to every Brahmins of agrahara even when he dies. Naranappa's decomposed dead body is going to be rot as the Brahmins of Durbasapura fail to reach any conclusion how to *Samskara* a boisterous and rebellious Brahmin. When he remains alive, he leads a wayward life which an orthodox Brahmin ought not to do. He is challenged only by moral unwariness of Acharya. Meenakshi Mukherjee draws a watershed between two characters in an explicit manner, "Both Naranappa and the Acharya represent distortions of certain values- restraint, control and denial in one and abandonment to the senses in the other'' (88). A lapsed Brahmin by choice, Naranappa eats meats, drinks liquor with his Muslim friend, catches fish from a pond dedicated to the savoir god Ganesh, throws the holy stone (*salagram)* in the river after spitting upon it, divorces his law-fully wedded Hindu wife, takes a prostitute named Chandri as his concubine and threatens to be a Muslim if he is ostracized. He even inspires Garuda's son Shyama to run away from everything and joins the army, an unbrahminic profession that disgraces his family. The flowers that bloomed in the gardens of Durbasapura village are used only for divinity; only the flowers bloomed at Naranappa's yards are solely meant for Chandri's hair and vase in the bedroom. The night-queen bush in Naranappa's yards induces lust latent in everybody's mind: "In the darkness of the night the bush was thickly clustered with flowers, invading the night like some raging lust, pouring forth its nocturnal fragrance. The agrahara writhed in its hold as in the grip of a magic serpent-binding spell" (15).Thus the entire phenomenon of Naranappa's domain is ascertained for "sensuous human enjoyment and not for divine consecration" (Mukherjee 86).

Naranappa once visits Shimoga and returns home with high fever and eventually dies. The conflict starts after his death because of plague and this contiguous disease is infecting others in the community. With his death the entire agrahara becomes quite with "no worship, no bathing, no prayers, no food, nothing" (12) because he has neither son nor money. Everybody is terror stricken how to cremate his body who unabashedly practices unbrahminic customs. Durgabhatta makes a compromising escape from this stifling condition through the comment that Naranappa "may have rejected brahminhood, but brahminhood never left him" (Samskara 9). As the couple has no son, so there is no one who has the right to *Samskara* his body; so the entire agrahara confronts a crisis which ultimately turns out to be a mirror of self-consciousness to everyone including Praneshacharya. The unventilated condition can be summed up with precision through Suresh Raval's words:

> In death, he becomes the source of defiance to the point of plunging the community into crisis. Through this crisis Praneshacharya seems to be moving away from an

> unreflective relation to his tradition and all its stultifying implications for his society to a greater critical self-consciousness about himself and the way he must think and conduct his life. (118)

The novel begins when Naranappa is already dead; though physically absent he becomes a potential force controlling the goings-on in the village. Knowing well that all the brahmins fall into the victim of avarice, gluttony, lechery and greed, he impugns Acharya:

> Push those sickly wives of yours into the river. Be like the sages of your holy legends-get hold of a fish-scented fisherwoman who can cook you fish-soup, and go to sleep in her arms. And if you don't experience god when you wake up, my name isn't Naranappa. (26).

In this world of hypocrisy only Acharya becomes the embodiment of purification who fasts and begs pardon to God on the behalf of entire agrahara. Thus to the savoir of Madhava Brahmins it is the challenge of a secular, pragmatic person, "to keep your brahminhood, you must read the Vedas and holy legends without understanding, without responding to their passion" (82). He comprehends his binary opposition is Acharya; Acharya is everything what he is not, thus he challenges, "Let me see who wins in the end- you or me. I'll destroy Brahminism, I certainly will. My only sorrow is that there is no Brahminism really left to destroy in this place- except you (53). Ultimately Naranappa wins after his death when Praneshacharya realizes he is not without human instincts. Like all other human beings he is also inflicted through lust, hunger, fear and aspiration.

Not only Praneshacharya and Naranappa but also Chandri undergoes a spiritual transformation in a society where she holds the status of a low-class black witch. Though she belongs to the family of prostitutes, she never becomes exhausted; she is just like river Tunga always flowing and never ending. Physically and emotionally she marks a contrast with other Brahmin wives who become saggy and withered after having two children. But Chandri is always fresh and blooming; She is beautifully clad and adorn her hair with fragrant flowers of the night queen grown in the backyard whereas the poor, sickly wives of the brahmins wore the withered flowers of the temple altar; she is "ever auspicious, daily-wedded, the one without widowhood"(36). Critics like Meenakshi Mukherjee equate her as a paragon of beauty in such way, "By virtue of her profession she is both outside structured society as well as recognized by it. Like the river Tunga she is in the village but unshackled by it. "How can sin ever defile a running river? It is good for a drink when a man is thirsty, it is good for a wash when a man is filthy, and it is good for washing god's image with' (44)" (89-90) .She lived with Naranappa for ten years in perfect harmony and unison; like all other Indian woman her only sorrow is that she has no child of her own which compels her to reflect upon this way, "If she had borne a son, he could have become a great musician; if a daughter she

could have taught her to dance, classic style" (36). When Naranappa dies, Chandri does everything within her grip to cremate his dead body in accordance with Brahmin rituals; when all other kiths and kins deny to *samskara* his body because of many religious and personal reasons based on property disputes, there was only Chandri who becomes anxious and worried of Naranappa's salvation. Chandri is not hesitant to give up her golden jewellery for Naranappa's *moksha:* Her only fear is:

> If Naranappa's body didn't get the proper rituals; he could become a tormenting ghost. She had enjoyed life with him for ten years. How could she rest till he got a proper funeral... If they didn't give him a death-rite according to the books, he'll surely become an evil spirit. (39)

Finding no other solution she does not see whether it is the dead body of a Brahmin or a suddra; she cremates it with the help of her dead husband's Muslim friend when Acharya is still on his sojourn. Sundari has summed up the quintessential features of her character that ultimately helps to achieve liberation in this following way:

> She has a conscience that is lovable. At least, she is not thankless; she wants the funeral rites to be performed for the separated man, with whom she had spent a good many intimate moments. (72)

With Naranappa Chandri also goes on her way of salvation through the sexual union with Acharya. She always remembers her mother's saying that prostitutes should get pregnant by such holy man, and such a holy man is no one but Acharya to her. She appeals to Acharya not as a seductive harlot but as affectionate as a mother upon whose lap Acharya could find a great relief after a strenuous and sterile journey. In a state of dazedness Acharya embraces Chandri's breast and cries out as a tiny child in excruciation "Amma" (*64)*. Critic like Sura P. Rath also argues for the same point, "Indeed, *Samskara* is full of references to feminine breasts as objects of desire, both as seductive flesh beckoning the barren brahmins repressed by their religious vows and social taboos and as the source of nutrient milk inviting the sterile men starved by their severance from the true adult pleasure with a woman" (108). After their sexual union when Acharya is struck by his guilty conscience, Chandri remains ineffable and absolutely untroubled by her present predicament: "she was natural in pleasure, unaccustomed to self-reproach (68)". Like Naranappa she breaks all the rules imposed by the austere society; being an exception to the entire community she eats in a natural way when all the brahmins of agrahara are supposed to be fasting; even when the crisis of faith appears in Brahmin society she acts with spontaneity and cremates the body unceremoniously. Only after the cremation she weeps for her dead husband and becomes invisible in the twinkling of an eye only to avoid Acharya's humiliation before others. Thus Chandri not only gets transformed but also "gets the better of Praneshacharya; she takes the burden off the

Brahmin's hands, but exposes the inhumanity of orthodox Brahminism that permitted itself to be trapped in ritual hairsplitting when faced with life-and-death issues" (195-196).

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Abuse and Violence against Children and Women in the Works of Canadian Native Women Writers

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Abstract

In the history of mankind the most loveable and affectionate entities of the human beings have been and still are children and women. Children are the epitomes of innocence and vitality, and are looked upon as the promising future of the race. Likewise, women stand for pure love, companionship and caretakers of a family, and thereby are looked upon as the nourisher and nurturer of that given race. But colonization has disrupted the lives of Native women and children across the globe and they have become easy victims of abuse and violence. My paper aims to cast light on the exploitative conditions to which Canadian native women and children are subjected, as portrayed in the works of Canadian Native women writers with special reference to Ruby Slipperjack and Beatrice Culleton.

Keywords: Colonialism, native societies, racial violence, sexism, affirmation of native identity

In the history of mankind the most loveable and affectionate entities of the human beings have been and still are children and women. Each and every race across the globe—Pagan or Christian, ultra-modern or backwards, mainstream or marginalised— reveres and treasures their children and women. Children are epitomes of innocence and vitality, and are looked upon as the promising future of their race. Likewise, women stand for pure love, companionship and caretakers of a family, and thereby are looked upon as the nourisher and nurturer of that given race. So when abuse and violence is committed against these two sections of the society it raises serious concerns about the well-being of that society. But such

revered and harmonious existence has been disturbed and disrupted as colonization set in. The native societies of Canada are such an example.

The matriarchal framework of the Canadian native societies has been replaced with the sexist preferences of the European society, and native women bear the brunt of the racist-sexist approach of the white colonisers. The direct adverse effect of the weakening of the native women's position in their societies has been seen on native children. They become easy targets of the colonial power which devises different oppressive policies— foster homes, residential schools, Children Aid Society— to weaken their faith in native identity and cultural values. They are deliberately separated from their families and thrown in humiliating racist social conditions where they become easy victims of verbal/physical abuse and racial violence.

The native societies of Canada have always held the world (both living and non-living things) in great respect and their cultures always believe in harmonious existence among themselves as well as with the world of flora and fauna. In their culture women are considered the most respected entities. Sahiba Al-Issa in her doctoral work Imaging Difference in First Nations Women's Writing in Canada (2003) writes about Canadian native women that they are considered as "the centre of the circle of life because of the sacredness of their reproductive powers, and are even believed to have an access to spiritual power" (36). The native societies are egalitarian in nature and, to a great extent, have been matrilineal in social framework. Women play active roles in creating and maintaining power-centres in their communities. Sahiba Al-Issa in her work quotes a study on native women's role in tribes conducted by a law scholar Robert Williams:

> . . . in a number of North American Indians tribes, women traditionally selected male chiefs as political leaders and could also remove them . . . Also, in many tribes, women owned substantial property interests, including the marital house, and exercised dominion over the means of production and the products of major subsistence activities such as farming . . . Women in many tribes held the power to initiate or call off war. (36)

Jeannette Armstrong in her interview with Janice Williamson admits that the Okanagan language does not have separate pronouns for "he" or "she" and her society promotes anyone, irrespective of gender. The one who shows leadership qualities and intelligence to lead the family becomes the head or power-centre of the family. Penny Petrone in First Peoples, First Voices (1983) refers to the radio-speech of Duskier, a Cayuga Chief of the Younger Bear clan of the Six Nations Indians who talked about women's role in power-formation as opposed to the European patriarchal custom: "We want none of your laws or customs that we have not willingly adopted for ourselves. We have adopted many. You adopted some of

ours— votes for women for instance . . . Your Mothers have a good deal to say about your government. Our Mothers have always had a hand in ours" (51).

Like women, children and their childhood are very significant in native culture as they have been considered the harbingers of the next generation. Since ages, the Native cultures have believed that the child is "connected to creation" (Ruby Slipperjack in an interview with Hartmut Lutz 209). The tribal Elders —the grandmothers and the grandfathers— understand the importance of childhood in moulding and conditioning their characters according to cultural ethics and values acculturated in them by their Elders. The whole tribe participates in the training and nurturing of their children as it believes that spiritually-healthy tribal members are the real wealth of the tribe. Owl's mother in Honour the Sun (1987) adopts three young children abandoned by their parents despite the meagre resources available to her. Thereby she is carrying out her duty towards her tribal communities so that the orphan children are not subjected to any abuse. They would not be mislead and would take the rich legacy of cultural values ahead in life. Such collectively-shared responsibility makes the native societies unique and different from the white societies in which capital imperialism and competitiveness hardly leaves any time and opportunity for the white parents to look after and rear their children properly. Patricia Riley in her work Growing up Native American (1993) refers to Inés Hernandez's statement, signifying the importance of children in native cultures: "Children are sacred and honoured members of our communities, as are the good grandmothers and good grandfathers" (12). The grandparents ensure that the stories the children hear help them to lead a good life i.e. harmonious existence with oneself, with the greater community and oneself, with the greater community and with the environment. And this 'good life' enriches the individual and helps him/her to become an asset to her/his community.

But five hundred years of colonization transformed Canada and the native societies, First Nations and Métis sufferers were the worst. Too much damage had been done to their tribes through negative representations in the media, literature and in official ethnographic and historical records and documents. In the name of land treaties, the lands were taken away from the natives and they were restricted only to the reserves. Sahiba Al-Issa summaries the damage done to the native races of Canada:

> They have been 'othered', dehumanized, dispossessed, displaced, even hunted down; their cultures have been delegitimized, and almost decimated, yet continue to be mummified and commodified. Policies that propagate racism, sexism, classism, and breed injustice and prejudice among the natives have been engineered and institutionalised by the dominant power group. The policies ranged from segregation to enforced enfranchisement to assimilation. (15)

But the significant damage colonization had done was the inclusion of Eurocentric patriarchal values of the colonizers into the native societies, creating vacuum in the power equilibrium in gender-relations. As a result the traditional co-operation and respect for the existence of fellow-beings was overlooked. The indigenous women have been subjected to gross objectification, abuse and neglect in all spheres in colonial Canada. Due to the discriminatory policies of the government, the native women's lives have been marred by social, political, racial, sexist and economic injustices that cut into their lives, reducing them to the status of 'doubly-colonised'— victimized within their own communities as well as in the wider Canadian society. The process of colonization caused a tremendous upheaval in the lives of men of the First Nations which also impacted the lives of women. The deceiving policies of the colonial government— taking away of Native lands, promoting welfare handouts and alcohol, and loss of traditional male roles of hunter, warrior, horse rider, rancher and farmer— have brought emptiness and ,meaninglessness of existence in men. This emptiness has been compounded by racial humiliation which eventually led to aggression and found its easy outlet in different forms of violence towards their own women and children. As Frantz Fanon says in The Wretched of the Earth (1963): "The native's muscles are always tensed . . . He is in fact at a moment's notice to exchange the role of the quarry for that of the hunter. The native is an oppressed person whose permanent dream is to become the persecutor"(53). Thus the native men have become susceptible to the influences of patriarchal ideologies that provide them a sense of authority and superiority over their women. They have internalised the mainstream view of male superiority and have started viewing women as the inferior sex and native women as "squaws" i.e. licentious creatures who are meant for satisfying gross lust.

The Native women writers witness these social conditions as the consequence of racism and blind pursuit of Euro-patriarchal norms that eventually ravaged their communities' social fabric and distorted their lives. The statistical figures related to First Nations and Métis women in Canada are alarming as they reveal facts about their poverty and the wretched physical and mental health:

> 'Aboriginal women on an average live ten to twelve fewer years than non-Native Canadian women. The suicide rate i seven times higher, and the average age at which suicide occurs is fifteen years lower. Aboriginal women are also more likely than non-Native Canadian women to live at or below the poverty line. Current Canadian government figures indicate that, where one in ten non-Native Native Canadian women is the victim of domestic violence, six in ten Aboriginal women are victimised'. (quoted in Al-Issa 144)

The oppressive government policies break apart native families and communities, pushing several native women to the high-risk zone of exploitation and attack. To meet both ends, they are bound to work in racist-exploitative small firms and white houses and some of them are forced to become sex workers. In these places they run a heightened risk of violence. A summary of Amnesty International on "Violence against Women and Girls in Canada" states the gravity of Native Women's condition: ". . . there is clear evidence that some men seek out indigenous women as targets for attacks. Acts of violence against Indigenous women and girls may be motivated by racism, or may be carried out in the expectation that society's indifference to the welfare and safety of these women will allow the perpetrators to escape justice" (3).

Through their works, Native women writers of Canada like Jeannette Armstrong, Beatrice Culleton Mosionier, Maria Campbell, Lee Maracle, Ruby Slipperjack, etc., serve as "consciousness raiser[s]" (Al-Issa 145) for people across the globe in general and in Canadian whites and the natives in particular. The central theme of their works is a protest against the breakdown of their co-operative cultural system which found its manifestation in alcoholism, domestic violence, broken families, sexual abuse of women and children, loss of pride and faith in native identity. Ruby Slipperjack portrays her protagonists' exposure to domestic violence in their homes and neighbourhood at an early stage of childhood. Owl in Honour the Sun feels the horror when she watches Ben's father cruelly beating his mother and no community woman is paying heed to this domestic violence. It is a clear sign of spiritual illness among the Natives as they fail to identify themselves with ordeal of others:

> Then, we hear the commotion by the store's storage shed. Ben's father's beating up Ben's mother. My heart is thumping very hard now as I watch the man crash his fist into the woman's face, sending her flying to the ground, blood splatters on the front of her dress. My knees are trembling and I'm starting to feel really sick in my stomach. The woman is screaming and crying and the man draws his foot back and starts kicking her. I look for a way to escape. I feel like I'm going to throw up. I shudder. . .
>
> No one here even mentions it. They totally ignore the couple. Soon I forget about them too. (68)

In Silent Words, Danny too sees an incident of domestic violence in the reserves which young children watching dispassionately as if it is a part of their routine.

Silent Words tells the story of Danny, a ten-year-old boy, and his experiences which reflect the hostile conditions of thousands of First Nations children who are abandoned, neglected and abused in their homes, in urban areas or on the reserves. Written in first-person narration, the story is told from the point of view of a confused, tormented and bewildered

child. The novel opens when love, care and a sense of belongingness have disappeared from Danny's life as he has nobody with whom he could share an affectionate relation. Danny lives in a town with his father, Daniel Lynx, who instead of being the protector of the family, acts as an abuser. His mother had left home as his father had an affair with a white woman, Sarah. At the very outset of the novel Slipperjack emphasises the need to understand the responsibility of good parenting in Native societies. At home, Danny meets with a routine of abuse and endless violence inflicted upon him, either by his father or his stepmother. Danny calls her a "witch" as she is a lady of dubious character, cheating her husband by sleeping with one of his friends behind his back. She steals money from his pocket and blames Danny for the theft. She is always in search of one reason or the other to inflict physical violence on Danny. His father never listens to Danny's explanations and readily believes his 'wicked' wife and beats his son. Treated as a pariah at home, Danny decides to run away from his home in search of his mother, Charlotte Lynx, to get reunited with her. Through Danny's experiences, Slipperjack makes a severe criticism of Aboriginal societies' negligence of its real treasure— the children. They are uncared for; thereby lose hope in themselves and life. Slipperjack cites one major reason behind causing gruesome violence upon their children and women and that is the 'internalised racism'. The Native men are humiliated and abused at the hands of the colonial oppressive authorities whom they encounter in daily lives. This deep intense feeling of getting insulted arouses in their heart a strong need to wreak vengeance on something or someone to ease their disturbed, humiliated hearts. And this anger channelizes itself in violence and abuse of those people who are at their mercy, i.e. women and children. Frantz Fanon in his work The Wretched of the Earth 1963) puts his analysis of the native man's psyche which is always full of anxiety: "The colonized man will first manifest [the] aggressiveness which has been deposited in his bones against his own People. . . . When the native is confronted with the colonial order of things, he finds he is in a state of permanent tension" (52). The white world tempts the native with all its materialistic facilities, beauty, comfort and respect attached to it. Fanon says that the native feels envious of the white world and never ceases to dream of putting himself in the place of the settler. And the white colonisers, through abuse and violence, contribute their share to add to the native's envy and agony: "The hostile world, ponderous and aggressive because it fends off the colonized masses with all the harshness it is capable of, represents not merely a hell from which the swiftest flight is desirable, but also a paradise close at hand which is guarded by terrible watchdogs" (52-53). Fanon's analysis shows how violence is internalised by the colonized: "The native's muscles are always tensed. You can't say that he is terrorized, or even apprehensive. He is in fact ready at a moment's notice to exchange the role of the quarry for that of the hunter. The native is an oppressed person whose permanent dream is to become

the persecutor" (53). In the Canadian context, the reserve once considered as a heaven for Native beings, became a living hell for some sections of society. Slipperjack picks up this social issue in both of her works, Honour the Sun and Silent Words.

The violence in the opening chapter of Silent Words goes right to the centre of racism. Slipperjack, with her economy of language, describes the place where Danny is alert to potential beatings from a gang of white boys. The reader perceives markers of the dominant, white, English, capitalist, consumer society in which the protagonist lives and suffers: a store, bubble gum, parking lot, garage, a demanding 'stop' sign. Danny describes the deserted looking street that leads to departmental store resembling "a scene from a scary movie where a huge monster from the swamp ate up all the townspeople" (1). The boy's visualisation proves correct as a little later a brutal, racist attack is wreaked on him by the feared gang of white boys. They beat him with fists and legs, spit on his face and throw sand in his face. As the boy wipes "spit and the shame off" (2) his face, he admits that he could not report to his father about the gang as he would not understand him. The capitalist, white society threatens the survival of the Natives as well as has hardened the affectionate hearts of the parents who are unable to understand the problems of the little ones.

In Danny's case his identity as a respected human being has been threatened by the white gang in the outside world but he suffers even at his home when he is physically abused and tormented by his white stepmother who is always looking for a reason to beat him. In the first chapter itself Slipperjack conveys many of the issues which cause tension between Native people and the dominant white society. When his white friend, Tom, wants to take Danny home to get his wounds tended to and dressed by his mother, Danny understands the consequences that if his abuse is revealed the Welfare authorities would separate him from his father, his only family. Tom washes Danny's wounds and the ensuing interaction between the boys provides a microcosm of the relationship between dominant Canadian society and First Nations. Tom suggests to Danny that he should find his mother and Danny shouts at him to "shut up" to which Tom replies, "I don't need no stupid Injun telling me to shut up!" (9) Tom sees his friend's suffering but his racism surfaces rapidly as his parents and society have ingrained in Tom the racial contempt towards Indigenous people. Even Danny acts very stoical with Tom. The relationship between these boys seems to reflect that of mainstream Canada and Native peoples.

The white government had founded the Children Aid Society in the name of betterment of the native children's physical and mental health but this colonial set-up acted the opposite. The Children Aid Society hunted for such native families where parents were too poor, or sick or abusive to take care of their children. The children of such families were forcibly taken away in the name of providing them with prosperous, healthy and 'civilised' white

foster homes where the little ones stayed till they became mature. But the hidden agenda was to separate native children from their parents and culturally wise grandparents so that the indigenous races could be pushed to the verge of extinction. In his conversation with his white friend, Danny too fears that the Children Aid Society would separate him from his only family, his father if the abuse is revealed and reported.

The Children Aid Society and the sop of white foster homes aimed at assimilating native children with themselves into mainstream society of Canada. Beatrice Culleton's In Search of April Raintree (1983) and In the Shadow of Evil (2000) explore the problems and sufferings of the Native children in abusive, racist and exploitative foster homes in which the children are bound to stay till they mature. The protagonist April, at an early age, is able to notice that the "medicine" her parents have been consuming is the major cause of their ill-mannerisms and anxieties which disrupt the cordiality of their family-life. This habit of alcoholism eventually brings her parents to face the terrible situation when people from the Children Aids Society come to separate April and Cheryl from their natural parents. April is five years of age and Cheryl is three. They are moved to an orphanage where they would be destined to live their childhood and adolescence in white, racist foster homes. This is the first blow to April's inner self which shakes her belief in the affectionate relation between a child and her parents. The dishevelled April in the grasp of welfare people shouts and screams for her mother to rescue her:

> I clung to my Mom as tight as I could. They wouldn't be able to pull me away from her, and then they would leave. I expected Mom to do the same. But she didn't. She pushed me away. Into their grasping hands, I couldn't believe it. Frantically, I screamed, 'Mommy, please don't make us go. Please, Mommy. We want to stay with you. Please don't make us go. Oh, Mom, don't. (18)

April's mental state speaks volumes about the traumatic condition that Native foster children have to undergo throughout Canada. They are snatched away from the cosy laps of their parents and put into white foster homes where they are humiliated and treated inhumanely by the racist foster parents. April shares her predicament of identity-crisis with millions of native children who are distanced from their natural parents and cultural heritage. They feel ashamed to identify with it in later years of their life. Such incidents shatter the children emotionally and the vacuum created stays forever.

April sees the effect of her parents' dependence on alcohol but not the reasons behind it. Due to tuberculosis, Henry Raintree, April's father, is forced to move from the small northern community of Norway House to the large city of Winnipeg. This relocation brings in changes in their way of living and culture. Jobless elders of the family become increasingly dependent on welfare handouts and alcohol. Alice Raintree, the nurturing mother, is declared 'ill' by the

white officials of the Children Aid Society and therefore unfit to take care of her children. The migration of the Raintree parents from the small community to a racist, unwelcoming city of Winnipeg deprives of the extended kinship network of the Reserve that could provide emotional and financial support to fellow families in its neighbourhood. These reasons are, however, in-comprehensible to April as a child and later as an adult. She could not comprehend her mother's helpless situation. Sharon Smulders in her article "'A Double Assault': The Victimization of Aboriginal Woman and Children in In Search of April Raintree" observes: "Construing Alice's weakness as rejection, April fails to understand how her mother's powerlessness as an Aboriginal woman cancels her power as an adult" (44).

The absence of the parents from the girls' lives results in the estrangement from their Native origins. Like many other Native children, they are taken into the care of the white societies, and therefore they are denied the opportunity to learn about their cultural heritage, their familial history, and develop a sense of community. The various foster homes to which April and Cheryl are taken, prove to be inappropriate in assisting the girls to develop positive self images. April's stay at the DeRosier farm shatters her identity and self-esteem as for the first time in her life she faces a series of racist encounters. Mrs. DeRosier always leads the attack and her children enjoy abusing April. She does not understand why she is called "half-breed" when she is just a foster child. Maggie and Ricky, Mrs. DeRosier's children, call her "squaw", limits the food April can eat, and command her to do endless domestic work. They even insult her in front of the school-children in the bus. Mrs. DeRosier enjoys the compliments of others for taking in a poor and helpless girl like April into her house. But the truth is that she takes maximum work out of April with the warning that she has to earn her living in order to stay in their house. DeRosier kids, Maggie and Ricky, spread obscene rumours against April's character, and consequently Mrs. Wartzman, the school counsellor, accuses April of approaching the DeRosier men to meet her physical needs. April is shocked and shaken as the counsellor warns her against the ills of early pregnancy. The stereotypical image of the Natives has been popularized to such an extent that even the young school children understand and use the slang, abusive racist terms against them.

April's experiences with this family upsets her connection with (her) Métis culture and community so much so that she decides to don on herself the mantle of white colonial identity. The venomous contempt received at different juncture of her childhood and adolescence fosters cultural shame and mal-nourishes her ideas of heritage. She starts to chalking out her plans that when she will come of age, she will establish her identity as a white person, "part French and part Irish". She believes that her fair complexion will help her to do so. She wants to shed off her Métis identity as she believes:

> Being a half-breed meant being poor and dirty. It meant being weak and having

> to drink. It meant being ugly and stupid. It meant living off white people. And giving your children to white people to look after. It meant having to take all the crap white people gave. Well, I wasn't going to live like a half-breed. When I got free of this place, when I got free from being a foster child, then I would live just like a real white person. (47).

Culleton through April's psyche depicts how the Native children experience a divided consciousness due to the white influence. They get so swayed by white domination, pomp and show that assimilation into white society becomes their only option. Unable to identify with their own culture, they feel completely lost. For April, DeRosier's behaviour is disgusting but still she craves to be accepted by the whites and to be assimilated with them. She considers the Métis as the 'have-nots' and strongly wishes to be an integral part of the white community.

Like millions of natives, April's mind is fed with negative stereotypes about her Native ancestry and racial shame. Throughout her adolescence and youth, she desperately runs away from the stereotypes labelled by mainstream society. She marries a white Torontonian millionaire, Bob Radcliff, but is divorced due to her Native Identity. Bob toys with her for the time being, and easily shifts his emotions to a white actress, Heather Langdon. Bob used April as a medium to get back to his mother. Her mother-in-law does not like her as she is a Native and Mother Radcliff does not want to have half-breeds as her grandchildren: ". . . They're Indians, Heather. Well, not Indians but half-breeds, which is almost the same thing. . . . That's the trouble with mixed races, you never know how they're going to turn out. And I would simply dread being grandmother to a bunch of little half-breeds!" (116). While Mother Radcliff's comment only mirrors what April has repressed so long, the comments force her to confront her own cultural shame. She liberates herself and finds a voice. She is able to say to her so-called friend Heather, "That Bob's mother would rather have a person like you, a hypocrite, an adulteress, as her daughter-in-law, rather than risk a few grandchildren who would have Indian blood in them, . . ." (116).

But the most tragic and dear price April pays for being a native is her brutal rape by three white men who racially label her as a "squaw". According to the popular notion, Native women are licentious creatures who are ready to go to bed with any man at any hour of the day and more readily if he offers a bottle of liquor to her. That is the reason why the rapists repeatedly call her using abusive names: "squaw", "slut", "whore", "bitch", "little savage", "goddamned cunt" (128-132). The way her rapists treat her shows explicitly that the white men have no respect for a native woman neither for her body nor for her soul. Beatrice sketches April's mental trauma through the repeated baths she takes to remove the bad touch, smell and feeling of the rapists from her body:

> I again went through my ritual of trying to exercise the evil within me by bathing. poured half a bottle of perfumed oil into the hot water and then spent the next hour scrubbing vigorously. When the water would get cold, I would just add more hot water. All the while, I thought of the rapists, laughing crazily, pawing at me, coming down on me, putting their smell on me, putting their dirt on me. And no matter how hard I scrubbed, I couldn't get rid of the smell of their awful slimy bodies, the awful memories. I wanted to scream aloud, that long silent scream I kept in my head that night. I wanted them to feel my anguish. I wanted to gouge their eyes out. I wanted to whip the life out of them. Mutilate them. Kill them. Because bathing never worked (146).

Native women are not considered as dignified, living entities by most of the white men. Their honour is seen in a low light and the label of "squaw" could easily be put on them. Even Christine in In the Shadow of Evil meets with the same fate as the maniac Dr. Coran attempted to rape her in front of his own family. Dr. Coran called the Métis Christine a "whore" and a "squaw" (106) who liked to get sexually violated: "You like that, you little whore? Oh yes, I know all about you. You squaws like to play so, so coy, don't you? And what you really like is for us to jam it into you. Isn't that what you want, my little brown whore?" (106). Agnes Grant in "Abuse and Violence: April Raintree's Human Rights (if she had any)" rightly comments ". . . misogyny is compounded by racism . . . Culleton reminded people everywhere of what it is to be an Aboriginal woman in Canada" (238). The indigenous woman has been subjected to gross objectification, abuse and neglect in social, political and cultural spheres in multicultural Canada.

The native women writers pick up the hard task of correcting the false and derogatory images foisted upon their people. Through their writings they show how positive images can be generated and re-establish the honour of indigenous women in print media. Jeannette Armstrong is one such dynamic and proactive writer who is dedicated to her objective of cultural affirmation. Armstrong's poem "Indian Woman" presents an image of real First Nations woman in contrast to the image that the white culture propagates, and exposes the reality:

> I am a squaw
> A heathen
> A savage
> Basically a mammal
> I have no feelings
> Someone is lying

I am an Indian Woman
Where I walk
Beauty surrounds me
Grasses bend and blossom
Over valleys and hills
Vast and multicoloured
In starquilt glory
(Breath Tracks 106)

Armstrong advocates the need to dispel the lies by telling "what really happened until everyone, including our own people understand[s] that this condition did not happen through choice or some cultural defect on our part" (quoted in Al-Issa 52-53).

As stated earlier, the matriarchal framework of native societies has been tarnished by the white colonial influences and have been replaced by the Eurocentric patriarchal norms where women are inferior to men and an unquestionable submissiveness to men's authority and desires is an unwritten rule for women for centuries. Lee Maracle in her feminist masterpiece I AM WOMAN (1996) shares her childhood experience that at the age of ten she had witnessed a quiet and deep respect for women and children. But Maracle was shocked as twenty-year-old by "concepts of sexism coming from the mouths of young Native men; no one would have dared doubt the intelligence of women ten years earlier" (IX).

Ruby Slipperjack has also portrayed this sexist attitude, a by-product of colonization, in her novel Honour the Sun. She agrees that the novel is "very pertinent social criticism . . . a very political book. It is a strong statement about violence against women and children" (Contemporary Challenges 208). In the novel, the young narrator gives an innocent account of the lives of her own family and her neighbours. But underlying this naive observation, readers can perceive a more sinister version of the narrator's picture of reality. Everything appears peaceful and settled with no sign of white presence. But oppression exists in the form of First Nations men who have long been dehumanised by internalised racism and consumption of alcohol, two colonial mechanisms, to disintegrate Native pride and cultural values. They commit acts of violence and abuse against women and children. In her narrative Owl registers her countless experiences of running out of her cabin with the rest of the family members in the dark hours of the night whenever any drunkard intruded their house. The 'drunken' perpetrators on payday implied the humiliation the first Nations man face and urge him to victimize women who are imaged as "squaws' by the colonial oppressors. First Nations men become the 'new oppressor'. Owl describes the agony and stark fear which rules the minds of the helpless victims with no one to protect. The father is dead and the older brother is forced to leave the reserve to earn a better wage: "Annie is still cursing and

swearing between each sob, but I sit in silence while the anger and hate settle like a ton of cold cement deep inside me. We are so vulnerable, this cabin full of children. No father or brother protects us; no police to come to our aid. We're at the mercy of all the evil out there" (Honour the Sun 36). And one day the inevitable tragedy takes place as the protagonist's mother is raped but the little girl is unaware of the grave situation. But the reader perceives the ugly truth between the lines:

> Suddenly, I'm wide awake. There it is, the noise that woke me; snow squeaking under footsteps coming toward our cabin. I'm out of bed and slipping on my boots when the first kick on the door shatters the stillness. Everyone's out of bed and dressing now, while the door continues to rattle and bounce on its fringes. Shaking so badly with cold and fright, I can hardly button my coat as I stand in line behind Maggie and Tony against the wall behind the stove. Jane and Brian are behind me. And Mom is standing beside us, waiting for the door to come crashing open.
>
> Finally, with a tremendous crash, the door flies open, bouncing back against the far wall. At the same instant, a man bursts into the room and crashes into the stove. With a loud crack, the stovepipe breaks above our heads. We shoot out of there instantly, into the cold night air. My feet fly swiftly over the snow, ahead of Maggie and Tony towards Aunty's woodpile, where I stop. Maggie and Tony follow me. Then, Jane and Brian come running and stand beside us, panting.
>
> "Mom! Where's Mom?" I demand and lunge, to run back to our cabin. Jane clamps a hand on my shoulder. "No!" She hisses, pulling me back. Holding me, she whispers, "She'll be okay! He'll catch you, too, if you run in there!" I start struggling violently. This is the first time anyone has ever been caught. He'll kill her! "Let me go! We have to help her! Come on!" I try to pull Jane forward, but she holds me back. I continue to struggle helplessly.
>
> When at last we hear footsteps crossing our porch, I stop struggling. We poke our heads around the woodpile and see the drunk stumble off. I dash out with the others close behind me. The light comes through the gaping door as we approach it. I bound onto the porch and through the door. Mom's back is towards us, her shoulders heaving. She turns from the lamp, pushes back her tangled hair from her face, and begins to tidy up. Then her eyes seem to focus on us standing together by the door. She squares her shoulders and says in a low voice, "Come on, get back into bed before you freeze to death!" (99-100)

The last words of the above given excerpt are no less heroic. Owl's mother who is victimized a little while ago, suppresses her own humiliation, pain and anger out of her concern for her children. She brushes aside the tragic incident and pretends indifference. In fact, she

temporarily repairs the broken door so that her children would not freeze from snow-winds outside the cabin. Native women never give up their role of the nurturer of the young generation but their male counterparts fail to act as the protectors and co-operative partners of the family as well as of the community at large. Lee Maracle underlines the derogatory status to which native women are reduced in her memorable statement in I AM WOMAN: "The denial of Native womanhood is the reduction of the whole people to a sub-human level. Animals beget animals. The dictates of patriarchy demand that beneath Native man, comes the female Native. The dictates of racism are thus that Native men are beneath white women and Native females are not fit to be referred to as women" (20). Slipperjack is very suggestive in her writing of the problems of physical and sexual harassment that the Native girls face and suffer at an early age. Under the influence of white colonial rule and alcohol, they do not respect the dignity of the girls of their own community and haunt and hunt them like animals and birds. The village boys like Freddy, Bobby and Jere pester Owl everywhere and desperate to "have" her, add to her agony.

The native women writers of Canada have portrayed the tragic state of native women and children and their sufferings through different characters and situations. Every writer has placed great emphasis on childhood, the prime nurturing period of the native children, showing the negative consequences of neglect, abuse, hatred or the positive response to love and care. Each story by native writers has shown that the solution to racial violence and racial shame is to foster racial pride in young hearts and return back to the roots of the respective races. Lee Maracle emphasises the necessity of teaching native values and restraining their anger and frustration even in the toughest circumstances.

In 2009 Pope Benedict XVI apologized to native Canadians who were physically and sexually abused at church-run boarding schools they were forced to attend, saying he was sorry for their anguish and was praying that they would heal. In 2008 Canadian Prime Minister Stephan Harper issued a formal apology in the Parliament stating that the racist treatment at the schools was a "sad chapter" in the country's history. Additionally he admitted that the policy of assimilation was wrong, and had caused great harm and had no place in the country (NBC News). The scale and severity of violence faced by native women in Canada has also been referred to as "a national human rights crisis" (Amnesty International 2). In 2008, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was formed which recommended that Canada should "develop a specific and integrated plan for addressing the particular conditions affecting aboriginal women, both on and off reserves, and of ethnic and minority women, including poverty, poor health, inadequate housing, low school-completion rates, low employment rates, low income and high rates of violence" (quoted in Amnesty 6).

For the welfare and betterment of existing situations related to native women and children, literary legends, academia, and government authorities are working in their own way. The writers are reporting the sorry state through their works, and instilling in Native public the zeal to go back to their roots and mother cultural ethics. Government authorities will do their work but first and the foremost native women need to realise their worth and native men should come out of the stupor of Eurocentric Patriarchy and follow their original cultural values which is full of compassion and respect for one another, both living beings and the non-living ones.

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