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Editor's Note

Singularities aspires to be a journal which not just records the researches through publishing, but one which also initiates dialogues and urges involvement. True research writing need to take on the job of intellectually activating untrodden tangents. The Singularities Conferences, envisaged as annual events, are meant to be exercises in pursuing the contemporary and wherever possible to be efforts in leading the contemporary too. Power being a tenet that permeates our lives in umpteen ways, the first Singularities International Conference has chosen that concept as its theme.

We are passing through an era in human history in which 'Power' is rampantly reformulated to accommodate partisan principles couched in self serving, sectarian and pseudo-secure terminology. Rather than evolving into a more humanised and democratised version, as many of us would have thought through our humanist simplicity, Power is assuming technological and theological proportions in unimagined ways. This explains why Power has to be dialogued and critiqued in its differing trajectories. The first Singularities International Conference is achieving this goal, as is evident from the conference papers compiled in this first of the two Conference Special Issues. Surveillance to Satyagraha, theyyam to cinema, politics to pornography, Geography to gender - the papers which make up this issue testify to the spread of the unseen filaments of the concept, and the manifold ways in which it affects/effects the ecosystem of cultural pathways.

We are happy to present the Singularities Power Conference issue which offers stimulating read in terms of perspectives and power.

P. K. Babu., Ph. D
Chief Editor

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Analysis of Nation-State Power in R.K. Narayan's *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*

Abstract

The Man-Eater of Malgudi published in 1961, along with *The Vendor of Sweets* (1967) and *The Painter of Signs* (1976) represents the maturity of R. K. Narayan's art. Since the time of its first publication, *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* has held its place as one of the canonical works of Indian English writing. The richness and complexity of this novel can be gauged from the numerous critical readings it has spawned. Most of the readings on this novel centres on it being a mythical fiction which translates the epochal battle between good versus evil and follows the structural pattern of order to disorder and finally the re-establishment of order. John Thieme identifies the novel as at once structured around the mythical element of Indian culture and traditions and also, as a novel governed by a sense of "familiar Malgudi territory" (114). Thieme describes this stable world as ruptured by the entry of a 'stranger,' a world which is an enclosed space reified by a border. In this chapter, these critical readings of the novel are not rejected but are used to examine the novel in a new light. What has not been studied in detail in any of the critical studies so far on this novel is the fact of Vasu's (the antagonist of this novel) connotation of being an 'outsider' to one's tradition and values as embodied in the space of Malgudi inhabited by like-minded community. Borrowing from the earlier insight of John Thieme, in this paper, the hallowed space of Malgudi/printing press, office parlour of Nataraj abruptly infringed by the 'man-eater' of the title, is what I undertake to study in this novel within the rubric of the space of the nation-state, a 'space' both mythical and contemporary. In understanding this space as symbolic of the space of the nation-state, I will look upon the outsider/insider relation in terms of the concept of citizenship.

Furthermore, my analysis of the novel emphasizes how the state is experienced, perceived and manifested by the citizens of the semi-urban town of Malgudi. The most important event in the novel, I argue, i.e. the religious procession of the marriage of Krishna-Radha led by the temple elephant Kumar encapsulates how the state enforces its governance on 'strangers' bordering on its territory while at the same time, substantiating its claims as the cultural repository of a given community. This paper examines the notion of 'space' as it is represented through the character of Vasu, as a wrestler cum taxidermist whose translation of the space of akharas confronts the 'space' of the mythical/socio-political place of Malgudi and the 'space' of home/printing press of Nataraj. These various spaces in their opposition, inversions and replication document the relationship of an individual with the state, the power of the state, as well as the connection with other citizens or individuals. Using the theoretical paradigms of Michel Foucault's heterotopia and Priya Kumar's analysis of stranger, I will study the structuration of myth, space and border as illustration of power.

Keywords: nation-state, stranger/outsider, wrestler, akharas, heterotopia, border

The Man-Eater of Malgudi published in 1961 represents the maturity of R. K. Narayan's art.

In this paper, the focus is on the analysis of spaces and borders as it is represented through the character of Vasu, as a wrestler cum taxidermist whose translation of the space of akharas confronts the 'space' of the mythical/socio-political place of Malgudi and the 'space' of home/printing press of Nataraj. These various spaces in its opposition, inversions, and replication documents the relationship of an individual with the state, the power of the state, as well as the connection with other citizens or individuals. This paper is divided into three sections. The first section primarily deals with the idea of nation as a narrative and also in terms of space/place as equivalent to the space of a nation. The second section will read the events and characters of the novel in terms of the representation of power. The third section deals with the mythical structure of the novel which conveniently fabricates the construction of power in interpersonal relationships.

Malgudization of the Nation

What has most fascinated Malgudi to its millions of readers is its whereabouts and related to that, its identity. Critics have been divided over this issue and Narayan himself has compounded the problem of defining Malgudi. When asked once about the spatial and cultural co-ordinates of Malgudi, Narayan refused to place the town on the map, saying: “it is all of those places. It is where we all belong and where we wish we lived” (qtd. in Nicoll). Attie Lange, Gail Fincham, Jeremy Hawthorn and JakobLothe in the introduction to their edited book titled, *Literary Landscapes: From Modernism to Postcolonialism*(2008) explores the relationship of how an “individual is linked to a particular area and community by mutually defining bonds” (xi). They have pointed out that “place is an element of space” and “both space and place are possessed of a narrative dimension” (xiii). Homi Bhabha, in the introduction to his edited book titled *Nation and Narration*(1990), documents “The emergence of the political 'rationality' of the nation as a form of narrative — textual strategies, metaphoric displacements, sub-texts and figurative strategems” (2). Narrativizing a nation is ultimately a study of what constitutes the space of a nation? Who are its members? And who are to be excluded? What are the terms of exclusion?

Henri Lefebvre's philosophical work, *The Production of Space*((1991) argues against a fixed physical geographical understanding of space, a space which is merely a backdrop to the central events of social relations. For Lefebvre, space leads to the formation of social relations and is at once a “field of action” and “a basis for action” (191). In the article, “Space and the State”, Lefebvre reads the development of the state into its modern form as a matter of binding itself to space. Using a few brush strokes of myth, ritual, and the construction of socially demarcated spaces where the eternal and the timeless seem to persist and continue, even as certain material and institutional transformations have become visible, Malgudi emerges, in the words of Thieme, as “a multi-faceted and transitional site, an interface between older conceptions of 'authentic' Indianness and contemporary views that stress the ubiquity and inescapability of change in the face of modernity” (“Geography” 115).

R.K. Narayan in locating the novel, *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* in the political landscape of Nehru's *Third-Year Plan* and China's future possible incursion into Indian territory and also, in the landscape of the mythical, posits a simulation of the phenomenal politics of the postcolonial Indian nation-state albeit in a comical mode. Here, past and present are in dialogue, so also, the abstractness of myth confronts the material features of the nation-state.

¹Specifying the occupation of Nataraj as a printer does point to the pivotal role he enacts in the construction of the nation, as it brings to mind Benedict Anderson's statement of “Print-language is what invents nationalism” (134).

This element is further clarified by analysing the relationship between Nataraj and Vasu.

(Out)Printing the Nation

The opening chapter of the novel introduces us to the main protagonist, Nataraj who also is the narrator of this story. Nataraj is a printer with a shop in Market Road, who along with Sastri, “an orthodox-minded Sanskrit semi-scholar” (94) runs his business quite comfortably. The narration of Nataraj about his family/professional life in the first few pages serves to exemplify a world at peace with oneself with no sense of disharmony and dissonance, a place where one belongs and feels 'at home'. However, his settled daily life is disrupted when the 'man-eater' of the title, Vasu, enters the premises of the press and not only encroaches on the private property of Nataraj but also, attempts to trample the traditional fabric of Malgudi.

The very first picture of Vasu depicted in Nataraj's narrative within the space of Malgudi posits him as outside its traditional mores and in fact, exterior to the space of the postcolonial nation-state. There is an indication of the anti-social element inherent in his very physical stature which seems to be surrounded by a “black halo”(Narayan, *Man-Eater* 13). From the very beginning of his introduction within the space of Malgudi, Vasu's forceful, aggressive personality fixes him as an outsider, a 'stranger', a “rival to [not only] Nature” (63), but to the fundamental traditions and structure of the community of Malgudi.

The concept of 'stranger' and 'outsider' has been the central focus of philosophy and constitutes an essential dimension of the idea of citizenship. Priya Kumar in the article “Beyond Tolerance and Hospitality: Muslims as Strangers and Minor Subjects in Hindu Nationalist and Indian Nationalist Discourse” reads the “stranger” as an “ambivalent” term, blurring the boundaries of “self and other, inside and outside” (83). The stranger is, as Kumar asserts, “a newcomer, an unknown and unfamiliar person, but not necessarily one who belongs to another space- another city, another locality, or above all, another nation-state” (83). In the same vein, Vasu is not a foreigner, a person who lives outside the territorial borders of the nation-state, but a citizen who has just come from outside the precincts of the semi-urban town of Malgudi. Also, Vasu's projection as a stranger within the closely-bound community of Malgudi is illustrative of George Simmel's views on the stranger.

Stranger as summarized by George Simmel is not “as the wanderer who comes today and goes tomorrow, but rather as the person who comes today and stays tomorrow” (1). Simmel's exploration of the term 'stranger' is contingent upon a notion of space which is not separated from the exchanges and responses that determine human social relations as well. In Vasu's coming to Malgudi from outside the territorial boundary of the town, and because he being a taxidermist requires the presence of wild animals, so Mempi forests at the periphery of the town of Malgudi serves as his present destination. Though he has managed to secure a place in the attic of Nataraj by fraudulent means, his disappearance for days constitutes him, as Simmel puts it, “the *potential* wanderer: although he has not moved on, he has not quite overcome the freedom of coming and going” (emphasis in the original; 1).

However, even as our first impression of Vasu as created by Nataraj of an image of a powerful, demoniacal strange[r], monster engages our attention we hear his life-history from his own mouth. We learn in brief from this eccentric, irascible powerfully built man that he has completed his post-graduate education from Presidency College at Madras in English Literature, History and Economics. Also, from his narrative it is clear that in the past Vasu

² John Thieme contends the colour blue as significantly permeated with religious overtones, “direct[ing] attention to a number of Krishna/Vishnu analogies” (Narayan 116).

was an active participant in the Civil Disobedience movement and had even gone to jail several times for his nationalist views and activities. After coming out of jail, he apprentices under a local guru of pahalwani, whose “training” as he tells us, “was unsparing” (Narayan, *Man-Eater* 16). He rigorously trained under this teacher where the training included, among other things, a huge diet meant to build his strength, skills, and his body (16). Later, he shows off his skills across the country in fairs. In these local tournaments or dangal, more than the techniques of wrestling being articulated, as Vasu's narrative express, his strength was used as a commodity. Vasu's narrative represents this guru as corrupt who appropriates the power of his disciple to accrue wealth against his name. Finally, realizing this duplicity Vasu strikes his guru at a weak point in his body and leaves him to die in this helpless state. After this incident, he “gave up the strong man's life once and for all” (17). He then enters the profession of taxidermy under the tutelage of one Suleiman, whom he worships with the utmost regard as he taught him the skills of “art” as “superior to nature” (15). Though his wrestling career ends, I argue, the evocation of Vasu being a strongman persists till the end of the narrative and frames all his future activities. Vasu's life-journey is unique as it shows a progression of his character along with providing a critical eye on the functioning and power of the nation-state, both before (nature of the political climate) and after Independence.

Joseph Alter's theorization on wrestling as a conflation of boundaries since “as a martial art [it] is closely linked to colonialism and nationalism” (“Indian Wrestling” 289). Vasu's progression from a nationalist to that of a pahalwan illustrates this blurring of the modalities of thought and ideological structures encompassed in these two roles. However, even as Vasu's diet conforms to the consumption of huge amounts of milk, butter, and almonds prerequisite for training, as Alter argues, to be the kind of embodied person known as a *pahalwan*, this imitation of the regimen of wrestling undergoes a huge deflection. The description of the wrestler as a committed citizen of the nation, whose regimented life revolves around his guru, the practice of celibacy and as a prototype symbol evoked by the nationalists in their struggle against the British colonial administration is in the description of Vasu, completely overturned. Vasu's denigration of all sacred institutions exemplified in his consorting with various public women, in his criticizing of the institution of marriage, in almost killing his guru, in his rejection of religious beliefs- all of these actions postulates him as a 'stranger' and not as the central citizen of a nation as it once used to connote a wrestler.

Vasu settles in the attic of Nataraj's printing press without having informed him (Narayan, *Man-Eater* 28) and converts the room into a “charnel house” (65), smelling of “decaying flesh and raw hide” (60). However, even as this attic fills with the stench of death, this space of the attic now turned into a “museum” (66) is a throwback to the multidimensional space of the akhara within which a pahalwan achieved individual perfection. This is an excellence, embodied in securing an individual within the spiritual and political ethos of the akhara which itself is a microscopic denominator of a nation. Joseph Alter writes that an akhara, “should be in an open area where fresh air and sunshine mingle. . . . An akhara is where one prays and where offerings are given and distributed” (*Wrestler's Body* 25). Vasu's attic symbolic of the translation of the akhara within the space of postcolonial nation-state verbalizes a rejection of not only paying obeisance to religious principles but also, the fundamental communitarian values of life.

On the other hand, the figuration of Nataraj as the genial, warm-hearted, sociable, generous but timid individual whose hospitable nature leads to the series of misfortunes that forms the plot of the novel has often been read as being threatened by the presence of the

cunning, aggressive and ambitious Vasu. But, this understanding fails to take into account the role of Nataraj as the focal site of the power of nation-state. In the first page of the novel we are told that Nataraj's wife continued with the ancient traditions of the family, but in the next few lines we learn that the traditions of this ancient home has been forever disrupted because the joint family system, the nucleus of happiness and continuity of traditions has been "partitioned" (7), with the division of the ancestral property. John Thieme observes that "the collapse of the joint family seems to signal a broader erosion of older, communal values" (121). The word "partition" opens the novel to a reading of the relationship of place and the situatedness of an individual, 'partitioning' of space in terms of identity, citizenship and the continuity of tradition.

The opening few pages of the novel suggests not only a nation-state constructed by the borders of division, but a politics of space, no longer innocent or utopian. Nataraj refuses to rent his parlour because he is not mercenary as the readers are duly informed in the early part of his narrative, although the "sordid and calculating people" of Malgudi consider him a "fool" (Narayan, *Man-Eater* 1). And instead, Nataraj describes his parlour room as a communal space meant to provide comfort and rest to passers-by. But this resting space also serves to intensify Nataraj's business dealings as "people got ideas for bill forms, visiting cards, or wedding invitations which they asked me to print" (2) though many visits of these members of the society also did not result in any financial profit. The framed picture of Lakshmi, goddess of prosperity, as John Thieme rightly observes, can be both a commonplace symbol to be found in many Hindu homes but at the same time, the goddess' "grace" can be understood as a "materialistic" presence granting blessings financial in nature (Narayan 121). So, even as Nataraj's narrative represents him as charming, friendly, helpful person, he is also not what he always proclaims himself to be as Fakrul Alam correctly pointed out, Nataraj also has a "tendency to dissimulate" (79).

To categorize Vasu and Nataraj's confrontation as simply a "great fight between good and evil forces" (Woodcock 21) is to altogether miss the point. If the novel charts the downfall and eventual decimation of Vasu- the former wrestler, Nataraj's developing confidence and the resurrection of his latent powers by the end of the novel foregrounds the limit that is constantly being drawn and transgressed by both him and Vasu. The blue curtain emerges as the most significant boundary that opens up the debate on the contested domain of citizenship. The blue curtain maintains order and allows for an established arrangement of life to continue but this hallowed space/border is infringed by Vasu who practically "tears" the curtain, an act which violates the "sacred traditions" of Nataraj's press (Narayan, *Man-Eater* 13). This crossing of borders, limits, and "symbolic penetration", in the words of John Thieme, "anticipates all his subsequent behaviour" (Narayan 114-15) but more so, leads to the constitution of who is a citizen in a given nation-state and also what it entails.

And even as Vasu is dehumanized, and to a lesser extent, even Rangi, the temple dancer is always constructed as outside the safe zone of the press barred by the grille or made to stand in the passage, all instances verbalizing the importance of boundaries meant to be respected. Nataraj, on the other hand, easily dissolves the boundaries to elucidate the power of the state. The conflation of boundaries between his shop and that of his neighbour, Star Press, whose modern "Heidelberg" machine Nataraj passes off as his own, enables him to secure more prospective customers for his business while at the same time, the business suffers for the Star Press. Nataraj's inability to comprehend the exact boundary between his establishment and that of the Star Press "no one knew whether I owned it or whether the Star owned me"

(*Man-Eater* 3) is a larger narrative of how the hegemonic, elitist practices take on other's spaces, other's (marginalized) activities to maintain their power. Nataraj's ability to enact the voices of several imaginary employees - a foreman, a compositor, and various other staff-members in front of potential customers to show his business as exceptionally doing well, when in fact, he is only assisted by a "well-wisher" (3) Sastri. This also places Nataraj as an ambiguous figure whose performance of becoming many-voices when required shows the penchant to appropriate and in the same vein, silence voices that speak against the hegemonic voice of the nation-state. This ingenuity of several voices in one voice maintained by the presence of the "blue curtain" enables the drawing up of a space which is sanctimonious and invokes the configuration of the postcolonial Indian nation-state of an undivided politico-social space, born at the aftermath of the Partition and nurtured by an authentic past; the space which is elucidated as mythical, symbolic, and material; the authoritarian voice which speaks for many voices.

The significance of the blue curtain as the border which entails the fixation of identities and which defines members of an organic community can also be understood within the political context of the impending threat of China "on our border", a problem for Nehru as mentioned by Sen while reading the newspaper (Narayan, *Man-Eater* 86). Garver in the article titled "China's Decision for War with India in 1962" charts the reason behind China's aggression during 1962 as an outcome of the "misperception" of the "Indian motives across the border" (103). The reiterated emphasis on myth-making as the cosmic and eternal vision of Malgudi and the significance of spaces not to be crossed over is a testament to the dynamics of political exigencies of its time.

Niraja Gopal Jayal in the book entitled *Citizenship and its Discontents*, documents the nature of citizenship as more than the fulfilment of rights. She delineates the "expression of citizenship" as "not only individual entitlements but also the performance of duties" (3-4), necessary for the ethos of democracy. Vasu's constant bullying of other's way of life and utter disregard for social customs as a necessary adjunct to his individual entitlements disrupts the ethos of democracy. If citizenship concerns the relationship of the individual with the state, Vasu's acceptance of Nataraj's hospitality as a feature of fundamental rights without a sense of obligation or appreciation of this gesture is an act of disavowal of one's duties towards another citizen/state.

However, if Vasu's misdemeanours are projected as criminal, his appropriation of the space of the attic as the storage place surrounded with "carcasses" (60) is at one level expressive of the Foucauldian space of heterotopia. Michel Foucault identifies utopias, as "sites with no real places" (24), a place which is an imagined space, an idealistic version of societies. Whereas, heterotopias as "something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted" (24). Vasu's room does not merely speak of an individual's self-destructive energies but also recalls the role of the state in the deterioration of this once patriot, turned mass-murderer.

The attic before being inhabited by Vasu was filled with "discarded paper" (Narayan, *Man-Eater* 23), "littered with pieces of waste paper" covered by "age-old dust" (26) of societal neglect to become a den of mosquitos, and the prime reason behind Vasu's death. Enunciating the second principle of heterotopias, Foucault says a heterotopia "can make an existing society function in a very different fashion; for each heterotopia has a precise and

determined function within a society and the same heterotopia can, according to the synchrony of the culture in which it occurs, have one function or another” (25). And the third principle, which Foucault enunciates regarding heterotopias, is they are “capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible” (25). Likewise, in this room several spaces intermingle; past and present inhabit together and points to how spaces can be appropriated to provide new meanings. Here, the past, ethical values of wrestling is also evoked, though now rendered impotent. In this palimpsest of images invoked through the heterotopic space of attic, I argue, the contested relationship of the individual with the nation-state is recreated.

This room filled with dust and grime, dead life experience, forsaken memories, I argue, represents a systematic failure of the nation-state to protect its citizens. Jayal elaborates that a democratic set-up cannot function, without the conditions provided “for the meaningful exercise of citizenship” (6). The extension of hospitality to Vasu presumes the existence of a home and the owner of the home and in this case, the attic belongs to Nataraj. Hospitality, according to Priya Kumar, even as it seeks to interrogate the notion of “ownership” and “mastery” is bound up with notions of “power and agency” (102).

The last section explores the overarching theme of myth that demonizes the patriot and the strongman even outside the realist conventions of the novel, transforming his creative and destructive energies as fabulist and thus strives to maintain the cosmic equilibrium of Malgudi.

Mythologization of Space

George Schopflin in the article “The Functions of Myth and a Taxonomy of Myths” rightly affirms myths as “one of the ways in which collectivities . . . especially nations establish and determine the foundations of their own being, their own systems of morality and values” (19). Discounting the veracity of myths’ historical truth, George argues, myths “creates an intellectual and cognitive monopoly in that it seeks to establish the sole way of ordering the world and defining world views” (19). Further, he adds that “through myth, boundaries are established within the community and also with respect to other communities” and anyone who fails to “share in the myth are by definition, excluded” (20). It is through these myths, I argue, a narrative is structured which ensures a continuity of pattern on whom and what constitutes citizenship.

The main theme in *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* of a corrupt man being defeated under the strain of his own demonical strength is read through the classical perspective of the mythical story of *Bhasmasura*. Further, the mythical dimension also becomes evident in the history of Kumar, the temple elephant who came by his own accord from the Jungle down to the Mempi village to become a part of people's lives like Muthu. And in the leading of the procession of the marriage of Krishna-Radha being celebrated inside the temple and outside on the streets, Kumar emerges as a symbolic fountainhead of tradition- the mythical narrative that constructs the imagined, the perceived, and the lived space of the nation-state. The space of streets in the novel is politically defined as Sen and other people associated with the religious celebration refuse to change the route. Also as a site of power, the procession on the streets is, as Ann C Mason explains, an occasion for the “display of community or national identity” (154). If the temple elephant, Kumar, symbolizes, in the words of Venkatachari, “the faith and fortitude of Malgudi society” (86), the procession evokes, in the words of Mason, the

necessary element required for national identity, and the “representation or personification of abstract values, such as Victory, the Virtues and Hope” (154). This procession not only pins Vasu who “recognized no sort of restraints of man or God” (Narayan, *Man-Eater* 94) within the space of attic but also, results in his anti-climactic death. Sastri in the re-telling of Vasu who “shows all the definitions of a rakshasa” who “thinks he is invincible, beyond every law” (94) and in his comic-mythical death brought upon by his own villainous energies, the ideology of renewal of order and continuation of values subscribed to by the nation is eventually foregrounded.

To conclude, the connotations of this superlative citizen of political arena lying all dismembered, an “irrelevant thought” (Narayan, *Man-Eater* 177) represents a disintegration of the elaborate way of life that was once sustained by a pattern of ethical living nurtured by the benevolence of the state. The postcolonial state's logic of enumeration leads Vasu to be encoded as no more than a bully, whose death unlike his physical size suggests the degradation of the whole discourse of wrestling as well as foregrounds his marginal status within the post-Independence society.

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On Becoming Animal: Harnessing the Power of Smell in Patrick Suskind's *Perfume*

Abstract

The paper is an attempt to look at how Patrick Suskind fictionalizes the tremendous potentials of the power of human beings—if their sense of smell, the unsung sense, were to be properly harnessed. In the novel Perfume, Patrick Suskind presents Grenouille (interestingly, French for 'frog') as the protagonist who seems to live out his life in a totally different universe where the sense of smell asserts itself in its most unimaginably acute forms. Even though human beings are supposedly differentiated by their body odour, Grenouille emits no scent of his own. Caught in what Agamben calls 'the zone of indistinction' and with his almost 'inhuman' (Lyotard) ability to harness all his olfactory powers, Grenouille not only puts himself outside all possible structures of power—individual, social and political, but also projects the infinite potentials of becoming animal. Grenouille's exceptional power of discerning and dissecting different scents helps him develop a unique kind of nomadic 'subjectivity' or 'non-identity.' Drawing on the work of Deleuze and Guattari, specifically the notion of their theory of 'nomadism' and 'becoming animal,' the paper attempts a reading of Suskind's novel, with a view to answering the noted philosopher Stanley Cavell's question "Can a human being be free of human nature?"

“We believe in the existence of very special becomings-animal traversing human beings and sweeping them away...”

—Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*

There is more than a glint of truth in the words of Gerald L. Bruns when he observes in his work *On Ceasing to be Human* that Deleuze and Guattari are 'notorious improvisers of concepts, which are not always meant to be clear (61)', for Deleuze and Guattari have conjured up a complex philosophical project that thrives on the idea of thought as creation rather than representation. This is evident in their entire gamut of critical works such as *Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Anti-Oedipus*, *Difference and Repetition*, *What is Philosophy?* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. These works have had a seminal influence on the philosophical world primarily because they raise fundamental questions regarding pre-existing structures and conventional modes of thinking. Why do we adhere so ardently to existing conventions and norms? What stops us from creating new values and concepts? What are the possibilities of an affirmative and creative force of life? Questions such as these suggest Deleuze's attempts to mobilize thinking in fundamentally innovative directions.

Deleuze's works confront and challenge systems of knowledge that have the tendency to fix centres and develop defined trajectories for thought. Deleuze put forward the notion that the lack of a secure foundation would provide the potential to maximize opportunities to create and transform life. As Claire Colebrook aptly put it, for Deleuze, 'life is difference, the

power to think differently, to become different and to create differences' (13). The seemingly Dionysian stance taken by Deleuze while resurrecting ancient philosophical questions in his radical and often subversive ways echoes the need to think about such notions as difference and becoming without lapsing into 'commonsense notions of identity, reason, [or] the human subject' (4). In other words, Deleuze maintains that all the notions that have *come to stay* in diverse domains—the academic, philosophical or social—need to be subjected to a radical critique.

One central motif in Deleuze's philosophical endeavour of difference and creation is embodied in the emphasis on *becoming*. Deleuze and Guattari assert the fact that becoming is not associated with imitation, likeness or metaphors: to become is not to be *like* something. While there are different types of becoming, becomings are all molecular or imperceptible. To become is to exude an impersonal force that is both transformative and affirmative. Thus, becomings do not allude to accessible precedents rooted in history, but aim at finding zones of indiscernibility – where all forms become undone and abound in non-identity.

We add to our life or power by 'varying' in as many ways as possible, and we limit our life by restricting our becomings through presupposed codes or rules. The human being has the potential to expand its perception to encounter other becomings, such as becoming-animal (Colebrook). 'Becoming-animal... is not behaving like an animal. Becoming-animal is a feel for the animal's movements, perceptions and becomings' (*ibid* 136). Becoming-animal when extended to literature is the power to perceive differently, departing from perception rooted in the realm of the human. It is the power of effectively presenting percepts and affects in order to create or produce sensations. Animals that recur throughout works should not be read as symbols that need to be interpreted but forces that present different tendencies of perception. Deleuze and Guattari typically read literature against distinctly interpretive paradigms of thinking.

It is with the aim of drawing away from readings rooted in what Deleuze calls *interpretosis* that this paper approaches Patrick Suskind's highly-acclaimed novel, *Perfume: The Story of a Murderer*. According to Deleuze and Guattari, any kind of literature that refuses to appeal to existing literary paradigms and certain supposed notions of identity is a *minor* literature. Such literatures have a subversive way of claiming its place in the vast literary tradition. Suskind's *Perfume* is an interesting case in point because it works by constantly escaping representation. The protagonist is not represented, but *becomes*, and by suspending moralistic judgments we remain open to extracting virtual possibilities and differences. My paper is an attempt to throw light on one of the virtual tendencies, *becoming-animal*, that presents itself in the novel through an intensive reading of the protagonist Grenouille.

Perfume is the story of Jean-Baptist Grenouille, a man with a supremely peculiar gift—an uncanny olfactory power. While human beings are said to possess a basic package of the five senses, Grenouille's sense of smell reigns powerfully over all the rest. In the beginning of the novel, Suskind warns the readers not to be quick to jump to conclusions about an abominable albeit gifted man, Grenouille, who lived in the 18th century city of Paris. Suskind goes onto describe, in telling detail, the events surrounding Grenouille's conception in an overcrowded and extremely stinky fish stall:

...on the most putrid spot in the whole kingdom, Jean--Baptiste Grenouille was born on July 17, 1738....When the labour pains began, Grenouille's

mother was standing at a fish stall.... She only wanted the pain to stop, she wanted to put this revolting birth behind her as quickly as possible. It was her fifth. She had effected all the others here at the fish booth, and all had...not differed greatly from the fish guts that lay there already, nor had lived much longer[She] wished that it were already over. And when the final contractions began, she squatted down under the gutting table and there gave birth... and cut the newborn thing's umbilical cord with her butcher knife (9-10).

The paragraph of Grenouille's birth offers the reader their first encounter with the presentation of affects, 'sensible experiences in their singularity, liberated from organizing systems of representation' (Colebrook 22). Suskind seems to present a world teeming with multiplicities, with the birth of Grenouille announcing the becoming of a force that will only grow imperceptibly more powerful as the novel progresses. There is the affect of impersonality in the way the conception of a child takes place: the mother is emotionally detached and only 'wished it was over'. When it is time to give birth, she squats down and prepares the way for Grenouille: it is clear that Grenouille has been *becoming* long before his conception—the idea presents itself from Suskind's portrayal of the affect of anticipation that lies carefully suspended in the opening paragraphs.

From the story of his conception, things progress quickly and hungrily, giving the reader a taste of the strange way in which the child operates, already making way for the reader's assumption that this is one child that is a force of its own kind, a force that is unprecedented and potent. In subverting the tradition of what constitutes major literature, Suskind makes way for a minor literature that opens itself up to virtual tendencies with the creative use of language and presentation of affects. Since Grenouille possesses terrifying affects that no one can truly comprehend, each of his frightened care-takers frequently leave him at the disposal of the next unsuspecting benefactor. Interestingly, the baby is soon baptized 'Grenouille', French for frog (a creature known for its powers of smell), another fact that points to his becoming-animal in that his nature perhaps demanded such a name.

Grenouille passes into the hands of the wet nurse Jeanne Bussie who, in turn, presents him before Father Terrier. Father Terrier initially refuses to believe that the baby is 'possessed by the devil' on the grounds that it is a 'pre-human being' which was 'of no interest to the devil' (14). Neglected both by humans and devils, the forces of becoming animal inherent in the child are gradually released. Bussie refuses to take him back even when she is offered a raise in her wages. She is convinced that he belonged in the realm of the in-between, the becoming, precisely because he lacks the human scent that is so intrinsically human. Despite Father Terrier's refusal to acknowledge the nurse's observations, he is unsuccessful in convincing the wet nurse to take Grenouille back. Father Terrier's worst suspicions are confirmed when the baby wakes up:

While the child's dull eyes squinted into the void, the nose seemed to fix on a particular target....The child with no smell was smelling at him shamelessly.... And all at once he felt as if he stank.... He felt naked and ugly, as if someone were gazing at him while revealing nothing of himself.... His most tender emotions, his filthiest thoughts lay exposed to that greedy little nose.... (20).

This is the first of the many descriptions of Grenouille's olfactory powers that conveys the animal affect that surrounds him. Father Terrier is completely horrified by Grenouille's powers; he feels violated and naked, as though Grenouille could smell through the filth of his thought. He comes to believe that Grenouille is 'a hostile animal' which he would have hurled 'like a spider from him' had he not been 'god-fearing' and 'given to reason' (20). The paragraph establishes the fact that Grenouille's powers cannot be helped; it engulfs him and can only keep becoming more powerful. The possibilities of his unique gift are immense: what could one do if one were to become-animal, if one were to fully activate the animal powers of impersonality— what else would one need if one is capable of being led by one powerful sense that allows all forms of cognition to take place through it? What are the potential dimensions of such an exclusively empowering gift?

Father Terrier's attitude towards the child rapidly changes from pity to repulsion with the recognition of the inhuman powers of the child. He is as baffled as Bussie with regard to the 'zone of indistinction' that Grenouille seems to occupy. In zones of indistinction, 'the very idea of being human, or anything at all, loses its application. In such zones, creatures of whatever origin are, so to speak, free of their origins, which is to say free from the taxonomies that separate them from others...' (Bruns 46). It is this zone of indistinction that Deleuze capitalizes upon when he introduces the notion of *detrterritorialization* and *becoming*. Becoming-animal is 'a movement from the major (the constant) to minor (the variable)', a process of detrterritorialization wherein 'a subject no longer occupies a realm of stability and identity... whose mode of existence is nomadic ...whose "structure" is rhizomatic... that is, restless, insomniac, or in flight rather than settled, upright, or at one with itself and at peace with others' (ibid 61).

Owing to his detrterritorializing stance, Grenouille is soon left to the care of Madame Gaillard, who was impartial to the tenants she took in so long as they were sponsored. For Grenouille, Madame Gaillard's establishment left him with more chances of survival than any other place. As a young child at the orphanage, Grenouille exhibits the affects of a tick 'sitting quietly on a tree and living off a tiny drop of blood plundered years before' (24). Suskind writes,

[he was] the ugly little tick... which by making its skin smooth and dense emits nothing, lets not the tiniest bit of perspiration escape.... [T]he tick, stubborn, sullen, and loathsome, huddles ... and waits. Waits, for that most improbable of chances that will bring blood, in animal form, directly beneath its tree. And only then does it abandon caution and drop, and scratch and bore and bite into that alien flesh... (25).

Grenouille is not *like* a tick, rather, he *becomes-tick*. He was, as Suskind would say, encapsulated in himself, waiting for better times, waiting for the first sniff of blood, of life, from which to feed off and grow. Since Grenouille is a becoming that escapes all forms of recognition, the children at the establishment sense this zone of indiscernibility about him. He frightens the children the way 'a fat spider that you can't bring yourself to crush... disgusts you' (26). They soon realize that he cannot be destroyed despite all their efforts, and eventually, they cease to try.

Grenouille could discern smell not only by their actualized properties, but their virtual tendencies as well. For this reason, it is much easier for him to understand material things like wood, fish or flowers rather than abstract notions like love, justice or equality. This is because

of the simple fact that ideas do not possess scents of their own; they are merely abstractions. He often wondered why the earth, the landscape, and the air were designated by those three arbitrary words when each one was filled with several virtual strands of odour. Language, for him, was inadequate because it could not accommodate the virtual. Becoming animal, then, cannot 'be terminated either by limit or language', and is the condition in which defined standards of practice lose their application or are suspended (Bruns 64). Rigid structures pose as obstacles to Deleuzian notions such as *becoming* since they are fundamentally free-floating and are not rooted in any fixed plane of thought.

By the time Grenouille is six, he olfactorily takes in his environment and even makes creative combinations in his head. Madame Gaillard soon becomes fearful of his invincible power to smell his way to her secret stash of money and leaves Grenouille at the disposal of a tanner named Grimal who was in desperate need for young labourers. Grimal is pleased with Grenouille's tough constitution, and knew he would be indispensable to his trade. For this reason, Grenouille was granted 'a small quantum of freedom' (34) that other workers seldom enjoyed. This is when Grenouille the tick is stirred again and is 'seized with an urge to hunt' (34).

Grenouille's search for scent in the streets of Paris leads him to his first encounter with a girl. He follows the girl's scent as a beast upon the trail of its prey. Grenouille *becomes animal* in his quest to dissect and feed off the flesh from which the scent emanated. As Deleuze and Guattari say in *A Thousand Plateaus*, 'A becoming-animal always involves a pack, a band, a population, a peopling, in short a multiplicity' (239). Grenouille exhibits a sense of the movement of the pack of wolves, even while being solitary. He moves with the stealth and the agility of a wild animal. The affects follow him wherever he goes, a cloud of animal-particles that gravitate towards him perpetually. Grenouille attempts to imprint her scent in his cognitive faculties, and in the process, she is killed.

His first attempt at extracting and storing the scent of a young girl is followed by several others. This raises a profound state of alarm in various parts of Paris. It is interesting how the microcosm within the novel exhibits the tendencies to adhere to, as well as suspend, defined social and moral principles. The best example for this is Richis, the wealthy father of the young and beautiful Laure. Richis is at once a caring father rooted in society as well as an individual open to the virtual possibilities of thinking. Richis seemed to take great pride in the fact that a murderer who was on the hunt for beautiful women as part of fulfilling some higher aesthetic motive would want to crown his pursuit with the murder of his daughter. The longer he ruminated upon these thoughts, the more he admired the mysterious murderer. In a way this line of thought challenges all presupposed structures of thinking that would assume that a father would never entertain sinister thoughts about desiring or murdering his own daughter.

Indeed the crowning project for Grenouille was to complete his collection with Laure's scent, but he is soon identified and tried for murder. Interestingly, Grenouille's trial seemed to move at a rapid pace because Grenouille admitted to the charges with indifferent ease. When a priest was called to the cell to hear his confession, Grenouille 'looked at him with total incomprehension, as if he had heard the name [of God] for the first time' (205). Grenouille seemed to live his life without reference to any transcendental principle. He was incapable of understanding abstract notions of good and evil. The notion of a 'guilty conscience' was as alien to Grenouille as notions of morality or ethics.

On the day of Grenouille's execution, both his executioner as well as the crowd was suddenly intoxicated by the scent that emanated from Grenouille. They were 'overcome by a powerful sense of goodwill' (212). Grenouille had 'created an aura more radiant and more effective than any human being had ever possessed before him' which left the gathering 'fawning in adoration' (215). The all-powerful scent exuded by Grenouille exhilarated them and made them revoke his sentence as well. Once again his powerful sense of smell and ingenious mastery over perfumery helped him evade his fate.

In fictionalizing the tremendous potentials of the power of the senses, Suskind paves way for a Deleuzian reading that invites readers to remain open to possibilities of enhanced virtual perception. Through a Deleuzian reading we see how the virtual tendencies of smell are fully harnessed by Grenouille. Grenouille is, as perceived by the other characters in the novel, often caught in a zone of indistinction, his almost inhuman ability to harness all his olfactory powers helping him develop a unique kind of nomadic subjectivity or non-identity that evades all forms of recognition. Grenouille not only puts himself outside all possible structures of power, but also projects the infinite potentials of becoming-animal in many instances. Grenouille becomes-animal unconsciously and imperceptibly: 'traversing and sweeping' over the human being, as Deleuze would put it, exhibiting a sense for the animal's movements, its perception and its impersonality through sensations and affects that Suskind sturdily peppers throughout the novel.

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The Play of Gender and Power in *Beegam Panikkar*

Abstract

Gender in a performance is constructed primarily through the stylisation of the body, its actions, and costumes. The play Beegam Panikkar by Kumara Varma, an adaptation of the Marathi play Begum Barve by Satish Alekar, explores the element of power within the performative nature of gender itself. This paper tries to analyse how the gender of the protagonist is constructed in the play through a variety of elements including movements, interaction with other characters and the librettos of Kathakali and Mohiniyattam, thus emphasizing the fact that the construction of gender in a performance is not very distant from the construction of gender in real life.

This paper bases its study on Judith Butler's idea that gender identity is not natural but a cultural and historical construct. According to her, gender is a performance of behaviours and roles which are assigned to specific genders in different cultural contexts; and which are open to change depending on the context in which they are performed. The play Beegam Panikkar tries to problematise the construction of gender in performance, and thereby in real life also. Gender portrayed in the play is highly unstable, resisting firm fixation, thus highlighting the instability of gender in real life too.

Time and again, the main character and the play steps into the indeterminate spaces between the various gender roles determined by society, thus foregrounding the fissures in the system. Beegam Panikkar deals with gender as a discourse rather than focusing simply on the behavioural patterns of a gender. The protagonist's shift in gender roles within the play reminds the audience of their own unintentional – even involuntary – shifts of gender roles in real life.

If power structures aim at the internalization of social discipline and conformity, then gender, as a discourse that generates and fixes certain pre-determined ways and modes of behavior, is undoubtedly a major aspect of prevalent power structures. This paper tries to uncover how the play Beegam Panikkar subverts the discourse of gender and how it exposes the ways in which the gender roles are created and institutionalised. I intend to explore how the play tries to 'defamiliarise' the idea of gender, reminding the audience that gender in real life is equally constructed and hence, changeable.

Power can be defined as the ability to influence or control the behaviour of people. It is an ability to determine the actions and thoughts of another person and also a chance to diminish their opportunities. Power may not always include violence or coercion, for the social world and the individuals that inhabit in it are themselves constituted by power relations. A relationship of violence is very different from that of a relationship of power, according to Foucault. A relationship of violence destroys its opposite pole, which may be passivity. While power relationship can only be articulated when the “other”- the one over whom power is exercised- “is recognized and maintained to the very end as a subject who acts”

(Foucault, p.340) Power, here, can be viewed as a specific kind of power-over relations constituted through accepted forms of knowledge and truth.

Each society has its own types of discourses which it accepts and makes function as true. They are reinforced and redefined constantly through institutions and agents of socialisation like family, media, art etc. Power dynamics in families and households play a major role in shaping power relations in the public spheres. The social institutions which are shaped by the age old patriarchal norms are normally tailored to men's experiences and opinions. They idealise masculine forms of behaviour and rely on men's power over women.

Gender identity can be said to be one's private sense of being a man or a woman. It is a sense of acceptance by the members of society into a specific category of people – either male or female. All societies have a set of gender categories that can serve as the basis of the formation of a social identity in relation to other members of society. Gender attributes assigned to male and female are different. Various factors like family, authority figures, mass media, etc influence the formation of gender identity. Every society has a few established discourses of power, of which the discourse of gender is a major one. The knowledge that an individual gains belongs to the 'reality' that is produced and reinforced through these discourses. Power, as a major source of social discipline and conformity, plays when gender in a society is represented as natural and inevitable. To be a woman generally means to be powerless, quiet and obedient. A 'real man' on the other hand is supposed to be powerful, outspoken, and able to impose his will, particularly in relation to women.

Gender in a society is established through cultural norms, social practices and other impersonal structural mechanisms. Language also plays an important role in this process as communication is always a certain way of acting upon other people. Gender and power are intrinsically linked. While power designates relationship between partners, gender plays a major role in shaping power relations. Gender shapes how we understand what power is and vice versa. As Simone de Beauvoir puts it “she is defined and differentiated with reference to man not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential” (Beauvoir, p.xii). She is the 'other' over whom the power is exercised. The gender differences in a society are defined by power. The difference between men and women, according to Mac Kinnon, is not just based on a difference but it is a distinction based on “power and powerlessness” (p.123), for they are constructs of patriarchy.

According to Judith Butler, society imposes various constraints, prohibitions and obligations on our physical body, thereby inscribing an internal gender. Butler's theory of gender performance asserts that gender identity is not determined by physical and biological factors rather, it is a construction or performance made of behaviours and roles which are assigned to specific gender. Gender, thus is not natural or inevitable but a set of acts and behaviours which are open to change and dependent on the context in which they are performed. The codes of behaviour assigned to each gender are related to the ideas of gender identity in that society. They are performed for the observation of society and their acceptance. Instead of viewing gender as an immutable physical essence, Butler viewed the body as a prison of gender and sexuality. Butler's concept of gender performativity emphasises her idea that the performance of gender, sex and sexuality is about power in society. Gender takes shape through its intervention with power relations.

The play *Beegam Panikkar* explores the element of power within the performative nature of gender by constructing the gender of the protagonist through movements, interactions

with other characters and established cultural discourses such as the librettos of Kathakali and Mohiniyattom. By revealing the modalities through which gender is constructed in performance, it offers a glimpse of how gender is constructed in real life. The gender portrayed in the play is highly unstable, thus problematising the construction of gender in the performance and thereby in real life. It resists any kind of fixation highlighting the instability of gender in real life too. Time and again, the main character and the play steps into the intermediate spaces between the various gender roles determined by society, thus foregrounding the fissures in the system. The protagonist's shift in gender roles within the play reminds the audience of their own unintentional- even involuntary- shifts of gender roles in real life.

Beegam Panikkar is an adaptation of the Marathi play *Begum Barve* by Satish Alekar. Written in the light of the Sangeeth Natak tradition, *Begum Barve* is the story of a small time female impersonator in an old musical drama company who continue to behave in an extremely effeminate fashion. When Kumara Varma, the director and translator of the play *Beegam Panikkar*, adapted the play to Malayalam, he made a very vital change. He replaced the tradition of Sangeeth Natak, which was little known in Kerala, with the traditional performative art form of Kathakali and 'Begum Barve' was changed to 'Beegam Panikkar'. The cultural adaptation of the story of Begum Barve was done by transforming it into the story of an erstwhile Kathakali performer who had played female roles and is now impoverished. The play was rightly composed with Kathakali music and enriched by vignettes of Kathakali performances by the actor Ramesh Varma, who played the lead role. This helped the play to directly communicate with a predominantly Keralite audience.

The play tells the story of four pathetic lives- Kunjupilla Panikkar, the protagonist who yearned to be a great artiste but failed to reach up to his dreams. He wanted to be a great Kathakali actor playing the roles of heroines, but ended up doing minor characters in minor Kathakali companies. Kochunni, Panikkar's companion, who used to be a presentable personality but now has a limp and finds it impossible to succeed in life; Tannu Pilla and Naanu Pilla, two clerks in the same office who are intimate friends and lead a listless, mediocre bachelors' life. Every character is fighting against an emotional void in their life. Their life is a failure. It is into these meaningless and purposeless lives that Panikkar weaves a dream world to which other characters succumb.

Performance of gender roles depend highly on repetition and reiteration in creating identity, because it is habitually and continuously acted and performed on a daily basis in everyday life (Butler, 1988 p.519). It is a qualified daily choice made by individuals. Gender performance in real life is learned both consciously and ingrained unconsciously by individuals. We are unaware that we are performing, for the act is part of a wider social performance of behaviour in society which is not recognized as performance. On the other hand, performance in theatre is a working out of something pre-scripted and consciously apprehended as performance. Butler identifies drag performances in theatre as a mechanism that uncovers the falsity of the existence of a natural gender identity. *Beegam Panikkar*, through its revealing of the social construction of gender attempts such an uncovering of natural gender identity. The play gives indications of how cultural conventions are embodied and enacted in Kathakali and theatre. Just as in real life the illusion of the gendered self is created through bodily gestures, movements and enactments of various kinds, and gender identity is established by repetition and reiteration of gender roles, the protagonist

establishes his gender identity through his movements, interactions with other characters and by the use of librettos of Kathakali and Mohiniyattom. But the gender that he establishes stays in a jelly like form throughout the play. It is neither fluid nor solid. Panikkar is a one-time Kathakali artiste who used to perform female characters or *Stri Veshams*. An insight into Panikkar's past helps us to recognise that his play acting as Nalinakshi Bhai in front of Taanu Pilla and Naanu Pilla is in accordance with the structures and culture of Kathakali and its librettos. Panikkar makes use of the same mode to move in and out of his identities as Nalinakshi Bhai and Saranganayana.

When Panikkar performs as Nalinakshi Bhai, though the gender brought to us is clearly an exaggerated version of gender in real life, Panikkar wins the acceptance of the audience in a very short span of time. As soon as Taanu Pilla and Naanu Pilla have accepted Panikkar as Nalinakshi Bhai, Panikkar succeeds in influencing his immediate audience. Through the marriage of Nalinakshi Bhai to Taanu Pilla and the supposed pregnancy, Panikkar is being omnipotent- the one with all the power. Panikkar's performance is a part of his predetermined act. Through his role play, he is actually scripting a new play within the play of which he is the center of power who determines the casting and gender of each character.

The play operates at different levels. As any other play, there is an actor on the stage and an audience outside it. The audience is totally out of the performance. Within the space of the stage we have yet another performance done by Panikkar and Kochunni in the life of Taanu Pilla and Naanu Pilla. In this play within the play, unlike the performance done before the general audience, Taanu Pilla and Naanu Pilla are an audience unaware of the fact that they are audience to a performance and believe that it is real life. The different levels of the play functions in such a way that we as audience are given a glimpse of the constructedness of gender and the way in which gender roles are assigned, repeated and established, probably giving us an indication of how the same processes are at work in real life. The very character of Panikkar who is conscious of his performance is the crucial point of reference for the actual audience. They are constantly reminded by Panikkar that he is only acting as Saranganayana through his constant use of Kathakali *padams* and myths in the act he has created.

The Kathakali *padams* used by Panikkar are very significant for they give pointed indications about the particular situation obtaining in both the play and the play within the play. One who is familiar with the Kathakali *padams* and *attakkathas* would immediately connect the original situations of the *padams* with the situations at hand in the play. They not only remind us about the theatricality of the play but also about our own experiences of watching Kathakali performance. Panikkar's stepping out of his character also has such an effect on the audience. Panikkar's resistance to any fixed gender role confuses the audience to a great extent. It is when Panikkar's performance starts to enrapture the audience just as it did Taanu Pilla, that Kochunni enters conscious of his own theatricality. The entry of Kochunni makes the play bi-polar - with Taanu under the influence of Panikkar and Naanu under that of Kochunni. Kochunni wields power as he is quite aware not only about Panikkar's play acting but also about his power in manipulating Panikkar's act. Kochunni creates an alienation effect by constantly remaining as a potential threat of disruption for Panikkar's act, thereby distancing the audience from involving emotionally in the performance put forward by Panikkar. This way they are constantly reminded of the theatricality of the performance and that the transformational power of art lies in the capacity of the imagination of the audience to

bring the possible to a level at which it can become reality.

In a theatrical performance, in olden days, the female roles were done by female impersonators. Theatre in those days had represented women who guarded their virtue in adverse situations on the strength of their chastity and purity. Kathakali is predominantly a male dominated art, which had, since the 17th century, been composed, patronized and performed by men. Hence, predictably, the female roles of Kathakali are a construction of male fantasy. The female characters of Kathakali show how the impersonators have chosen to interpret the female roles, thus articulating the male view of the female in her mythically divine and mortal forms. A closer examination of the female roles would reveal which aspect of the feminine are highly revered and praised and which are feared and loathed.

In Kathakali, there are three different female character types- the *Minukku*, the *Lalitha* and the *Kari*. *Minukku* is the noble maiden. She is a restrained character, like Sita whose virtues are praised. She is beautiful and behaves in a chaste and modest manner. She is idealised by the actor or hero. The *Lalitha* is a female demon in disguise as a maiden. She adopts a freer mode of behaviour and often expresses her erotic desires. *Lalitha* is an embodiment of ambiguity and threat, representing the confusion between what she appears to be and what she is in reality. *Kari* is *Lalitha* without disguise. She is a grotesque and vile creature exceeding all acceptable limits. She represents the complete abandonment of any moral or sexual ethic and is invariably punished for her transgressions.

Panikkar is trained to do *Stri Veshams* (female roles) in Kathakali. A Kathakali actor learns all the roles they need to know in training. Unlike other performing arts, there are no separate training methods in Kathakali, for male and female roles. Every actor learns to do all the roles, facial expressions and gestures. Panikkar being a failure in his profession and life does not undo the Kathakali training he has undergone. His awareness of the representation of the feminine in Kathakali enables him to bring to us a vivid representation of a female. Panikkar views his entire life in terms of Kathakali and *attakkathas*. For Panikkar, life is yet another performance where he establishes his role through repetition and reiteration. Gender is only a qualified choice for Panikkar and the language of Kathakali a means of communication. In a way, gender is only a code of the body and of actions that Panikkar uses to influence his audience. His relationship with theatre brings the world of theatre directly to the world of the play. The use of metaphoric discourse and mannerisms, which is very distinct from ordinary language, constantly reminds the audience that this is only a performance and not a representation of reality.

Panikkar seems to be very selective in using Kathakali *padams*. The librettos of Kathakali and Mohiniyattom are used by Panikkar as one of the chief means to establish his gender in the play within the play. Panikkar establishes the gender identity of a female by adopting the language and gestures that are normally attributed to a female role in Kathakali. In the beginning of the play, while Panikkar introduces himself to the audience as an erstwhile Kathakali artiste, he sings a *padam* from *Keechaka Vadham* in which he places himself in the position of Malini- Panchali incognito. The *padam* establishes the nature of Panchali as an ideal, virtuous woman. Later as the play proceeds, when Panikkar begins his veneer as Mrs. Nalinakshi Bhai, he sings *sringara padams* like the ones from *Rukmangadacharitham* where he places himself as Mohini. Mohini's character too is a *Minukku* like that of Panchali.

Power is not simply violence, as suggested earlier, but also how people are disciplined

and made to behave in specific ways. When Panikkar enters into Taanu Pilla's and Naanu Pilla's life no violence is being attached to it. But through the mode of Kathakali he influences them and they, especially Taanu Pilla, are made to behave in a particular way. As Taanu Pilla gets more and more engrossed in the performance of Panikkar, he starts envisaging various romantic scenes in which his wife is singing a Padam which tells about a woman waiting for her beloved. Singing a Kathakali Padam that shows the myth of a romantic heroine emphasises Taanu's notion of what a man expects a woman to do. Taanu by singing a *sringara Padam* is actually exhibiting the concept of gender roles which he had unconsciously internalised in his life. Also, it shows how he has imbibed the gender identity established by Panikkar. Through his play acting as Saranganayana, Panikkar, is not just defining the character's gender but also aids the transformation in Taanu's and Naanu's life and character. In the presence of Nalinakshi Bhair, Taanu feels the need to act as a man. He starts to be more dominant and tries to control his wife. While Taanu Pilla feels manly and responsible for Nalinakshi Bhair, Naanu Pilla feels that he is not man enough for Vasudha, his lost love. The changes in their life show how Taanu and Naanu have internalised and reproduce the patterns of gender identity established by Panikkar.

Panikkar uses various Kathakali *padams* of which that of *Poothanamoksham* is very significant. Its repeated use makes it a motif in the performance. The padam of *Poothanamoksham* is used first by Panikkar when Saranganayana informs her husband of her pregnancy. Poothana is an ogress who is commissioned by the wicked King Kamsa to kill his nephew, who was secreted at Gokul, by poisoning him with her milk. For this, she transforms herself into a beautiful damsel and enters the nursery and feeds him with poisoned milk. But, the godly child Krishna sucks the life out of her. When finally she drops dying on the floor, no trace remains of the lovely woman she was before. She is a ghastly *rakshasi* killed by her own wicked deed.

Saranganayana uses the *padam* from the first part of the story of *Poothanamoksham*, where Poothana sees Krishna and admires his beauty. Her first impulse is not that of a *rakshasi* but of a mother, incapable of killing the child. Here, Panikkar is also speaking of the beauty of the child which is about to be born. Panikkar's love towards his child is expressed ingeniously through the *padam*. Just as Poothana is aware of her intent to kill the child, Panikkar is clearly aware of his inability to bring the unborn child to life. Poothana's is a round character. She is a *Lalitha* who appears like a *Minukku*. *Lalitha* is beautiful and attractive. Panikkar's Saranganayana is a *Lalitha*- a demon in disguise of a virtuous woman. The use of the *padam* from *Poothanamoksham* brings in the 'real character' of Saranganayana. Anyone who is familiar with the story of *Poothanamoksham* will soon identify the duality of the character. The *Lalitha* is a spillover of *Minukku*. It represents a constant anxiety of patriarchy. *Lalitha* shows that the society cannot be understood on the basis of strict binaries. The use of the *padam* indicates the upcoming change in the character of Saranganayana- a shift from *Minukku* to *Lalitha*. Soon, Taanu Pilla sings the second part of the same padam imagining his wife feeding his baby with love.

The representation of feminine in Kathakali, according to Carolin Osella, "refers both to general representation of womanhood and to specific male anxieties about identity and gender" (p.241). When Taanu sings the *padam* trying to emphasise the motherly love of his wife, he is trying to strengthen his own notions of a female and a mother. While with the use of this *padam* Panikkar tries to indicate a shift in character, Taanu tries to fortify the existing

ideas about women for, “maintaining control over the feminine construction in Kathakali allows men to safeguard their own imaginaries of women” (Pitkow: p.34). But Taanu's intervention is soon broken as the character of Saranganayana takes a swift change when she sings the *padam* from *Santhanagopalam* to speak of her apprehensions of losing her child. As if to save her unborn child, she tries to pull it out from her womb. The performance of Panikkar accompanied by the *padam* from *Santhanagopalam* shocks the audience as it exposes the absence of child in the womb. Here, the play-acting grows to a level of nightmare from that of a simple dream. Panikkar's performance emphasises that the play is only an indication of reality just as there was only an indication of baby in the womb.

The final stab to the very notion of femininity is given in the last scene when Panikkar storms onto the stage holding two lighted *pandams* (torches) and screaming out loud creating an eerie atmosphere. The scene is reminiscent of the scene in Kathakali performances when *Kari* re-enters after the battle in *attakkathas* like *Narakasuravadham* and *Kharavadham*. In this scene in *Kharavadham*, *Shurpanagha* appears in *ninam aninja vesham* or blood dripping costume. All the lights are turned off and *Kari* enters from the back of the audience, flanked by attendants carrying burning torches. A large cloth dipped into dark red dye mixture is dropped around the *Kari's* body, covering her from neck down to the ground, eerily looking like dripping blood, she screams and scowls in pain. Panikkar's scream is similar that of Poothana when she is forced out of her beautiful form. The torch and his loud voice convey the wrath, pain and sorrow in every effective manner than any dialogue or gesture may convey them. Panikkar's scream indicates the final shift of character of Panikkar- from a *Lalitha* to a *Kari*- and shocks Taanu, Naanu and also the audience. The transformation to *Kari* forces everyone out of their dream world emphasising the fact that women exist in such forms too. It disturbs and ruptures the male fantasy of femininity. Panikkar through his transformation from a *Minukku* to *Lalitha* and finally to a *Kari* subverts and defamiliarises the process of normalisation of femininity.

The beliefs and behaviours in a society are constantly repeated and reinforced. Gender is no exception. Gender identity is realised through the interaction with social and cultural context. It is not natural or inevitable and hence not unalterable. “There is no proper gender, a gender proper to one sex rather than another” (Butler, p.127). By presenting the constructed femininity in Kathakali, the play *Beegam Panikkar* stresses on the constructedness of the very concept of gender. Both Kochunni and Panikkar represent the power within the social system that could affect one's reality. The play makes us rethink the very idea of gender and the role of power in shaping it. It is an effort to change a social reality by altering the discourses that help constitute it. It makes the audience realise that gender in real life is equally constructed and hence changeable with the use of certain power.

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Controlling the Body: Power, 'Bare Life' and the Ownership of the Body in Select Contemporary Films

Abstract

*Quantifying the 'humanness' of an entity has been the preoccupation of various societies since their inception. The act of quantification prompts us to ask: who or what a 'human' is? A 'human' was understood by many as anyone who belonged to the species *Homo sapiens* in the biological chain. The Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben puts forth a different opinion on the issue in his work *Homo Sacer*. Agamben creates the categories of 'good life' and 'bare life'. 'Good life' adheres to the rules made by a sovereign power while 'bare life' has either transgressed those rules or is condemned since creation by the sovereign. The 'lives', 'livelihoods' and 'selves' of the latter are centred around rules made for them by powers greater than themselves. In effect, their 'humanness' is determined by these powers.*

*The texts that I examine are three movies: Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2010) directed by Mark Romanek, Jodi Picoult's *My Sister's Keeper* (2009) by Nick Cassavetes and *Repo Men* (2010) by Alex Cox. The movies pose the central question of the ownership of the body which is a basic right in life. All the central characters are persecuted by various institutions (medical, economic or familial) which 'own' them. They are owned by either creating them with a purpose for existence (as clones for organ donation) or by remaking them with a luxury (like an artificial heart for instance) which they have to purchase.*

*These movies make us question the very notion of humanity, what it is that defines/constitutes a human. When is a person fully in possession of himself (be it legally, biologically or economically). The factors used to confer the status of 'good life' and 'bare life' to people in the movies is utilitarian in nature. These questions blur the lines between the category of *Homo sapiens* and the Foucauldian 'Homo Economicus'.*

I have made use of a biopolitic and posthumanist perspective in my attempt to bring out the politics of self-propagation through the construction and discarding specific 'others' for the sustenance of the human race. Human nature is determined by different systems of power which work upon it. I look at the category of 'bare life' and how it is created by and conferred to 'humans' by the power structures they are subject to. I also seek to illustrate how the motives that drive these structures of control are purely economic and utilitarian.

The (physical) body is a device that allows us to perform functions. The (physical) body is very malleable and can be modified and channelled in particular ways to suite our needs. It's through an exertion of control that our body can be channelized and remodeled. Society makes it necessary for us to control our body and its functions and act in acceptable ways. People, in a society, are not allowed to act on their own accord to ensure the proper functioning of society. This paper is an attempt to look at how beings that are bodily different are excluded from enjoying the benefits of a society on the basis of their 'difference'. The

primary texts which I am using here are three movies, namely: Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go* (2010) directed by Mark Romanek, Jodi Piccolut's *My Sister's Keeper* (2009) by Nick Cassavetes and *Repo Men* (2010) by Alex Cox.

I look at these texts through the lens of post-humanism (by giving a bio-political analysis), I will look at how life is given a certain value (I will refer to it as bio-value throughout the course of the paper), how the assigned values help to include or exclude people from the polis and their attempts to evade exclusion. The conclusion of my paper talks 'grievability' and 'non grievability' of their lives.

The source of my central argument comes from Giorgio Agamben's 'Homo Sacer' where he talks about an old roman law that deems a person in the polis either *Bios* (qualified life) or *Zoë* (bare life), and transgressors are deemed *Homo Sacer* (sacred) and kept in a state of exception barring them from enjoying any legal or societal privileges. The state of exception, according to Agamben, applies to both the sovereign as well as a person who is deemed *Homo Sacer*. The sovereign exists in a state of exception from the juridico-political system being its creator. A 'sacred man' is put in a state of exception by that very system of which he/she is a part of, in other words: s/he is legally illegal. I will also use works by M.E.G. Kelley, Pramod K Nayar, Nicholas Rose and Carlos Novas as their works push Agamben's thesis forward and helped me form my central argument.

M.E.G Kelley expands the idea of biopolitics making it more specific. In his work "International Biopolitics: Foucault, Globalisation and Imperialism" he explicates the concepts of biopower and biopolitics. He understands biopolitics as "the technology that enables the control of population", he believes that population is itself constituted by biopolitics and that biopolitics precedes population. A 'population' is created with the emergence of a technology of control which Foucault calls the 'sovereign', a technology of 'spectacular' and 'extraordinary' physical violence. Kelley says that biopolitics is used to control 'biopower' through the maximisation of the biovalue of the people while the sovereign controls the population using 'thanatopolitics' which implies the use of violence to both control and maximise the efficiency of biopower.

Nicholas Rose and Carlos Novas define the concept of biologic citizenship in their work titled "Biologic Citizenship". In the essay they use the term biopolitics "descriptively, to encompass all those citizenship projects that have linked their conception of citizens to beliefs about the biological existence of human beings as individuals, as families and lineages, as communities, as population and races, and as a species." They argue that biologic citizenship embodies a demand for particular protection, like the enactment of or cessation of certain policies and access to special resources. Nayar in his work "A New Biological Citizenship: Posthumanism in Octavia Butler's *Fledgling*" expounds the idea of memory citizenship that the character obtains through the act of mourning. I use the concept differently as, in the primary texts I use, it's an emotional citizenship that is formed by the central characters to create a collective (*Never Let Me Go* and *Repo Men*) or get admitted into an existing one (*My Sister's Keeper*).

I use the above mentioned theoretic framework to construct my central argument: Biopolitics plays a pivotal role in making lives 'grievable'. Bodily difference makes lives grievable. The differences of the characters in all movies however are created by the sovereign for exploiting their lives. In *'Never Let Me Go'* all characters are fully human

¹Quoted in Kelley, M.E.G. "International Biopolitics: Foucault, Globalisation and Imperialism". pg 4

²Quoted in Rose, Nicholas and Novas, Carlos. "Biologic Citizenship". Pg 440

except for the fact that they are clones. Anna in 'My Sister's Keeper' is a normal child whose only 'abnormality' is the fact that she is a genetically engineered copy of her sister. Remy in 'Repo Men' possesses an artificial organ. It is these differences which their respective sovereigns use to exploit and persecute them. The means different characters use to assert their subjectivity and get admission into 'humanity': Tommy D and Kathy H (from *Never Let Me Go*) try to assert their personhood with the help of art. Anna (in *My Sister's Keeper*) on the other hand tries to assert herself through the legal system by suing her parents. Remy (in *Repo Men*) attempts to assert his personhood by narrating his 'story'. I will detail all their attempts to assert their subjectivity in the coming sections. I have divided my paper into three major sections wherein I deal with how bodily difference is used by the sovereign to make their lives expendable, the different biocitizenships they form, the use of biopolitics and thanatopolitics at different points.

Life

In this section I look at how the sovereign has declared the lives of the characters 'sacred' and how these lives exist in a state of exception. 'Zoë' (or bare life) is never fully excluded from the polis, they exist in the realm of the 'Bios' or qualified life, they are not removed from the heart of the society but are exiled into its exterior. Bios and Zoë have a self-other relationship. The sovereign defines the Zoë's existence and its own existence through acts of violence on the Zoë. Zoë is always under surveillance; surveillance helps the sovereign put them in a state of double exception. They are neither allowed to escape the polis nor are they complete members. Their existence is a requirement for the functioning of the polis.

In *Never Let Me Go*, the characters are born with a purpose. They are clones created for organ harvesting and transplantation. The only future they have is 'completion': a series of organ transplants which leads to mortality. The clones are allowed to live in their past and present and are denied a future. Among the clones there are two types of characters: the carers and the donors. The carers look after the donors and prepare them for donation. Carers perform the function of a shepherd herding the cattle (donors) to their deaths and finally dying when their turn comes.

The lives of the characters are always monitored to ensure that they are healthy to donate organs. Their habits are controlled: eating habits are regulated; they are not allowed to smoke, consume alcohol and so on. They are given tags on their wrists which help the authorities monitor them. They are kept in institutions which valorise their lives as noble sacrifices. A carer, who tells them about their life and its purpose, is expelled from that institute. The children are made to role play as normal citizens in order to acculturate them into 'real' society and make them behave 'normally' in public. In this movie the central characters try to defer their fate by displaying their works of art. 'Art' is a device of surveillance in the movie. Art enables the sovereign to look at whether the clones have any souls at all. Art is used as marker of difference between the clones and 'humans'. Their states of exception are evident as they are denied rights to their body and are only allowed to 'complete'.

The movie *My Sister's Keeper* shows the parents of a girl deciding to create genetically engineered clone of their ailing daughter. The clone exists as a spare for the original. In this movie, the family is a biopolitical community which tries to save the life of one of the main members of the family by sacrificing the spare. The clone is treated as another member of the

family with all rights except the rights to her own body. Procedures such as bone marrow aspiration, stem cell extraction and so on have been performed since her birth. The clone child (Anna) finally decides to sue her parents for medical emancipation. The whole story revolves around Anna's fight for justice. The donations were initially carried out by offering Anna 'treats', some of the procedures resulted in complications which could have been life threatening.

Upon her denial to donate, she is emotionally blackmailed by citing her sick and dying sister. The act of emotional blackmailing I see as an attempt by the sovereign (her mother) to control the child (Anna). By blackmailing she is actually invoking 'family citizenship' wherein all members are bound by filial and marital ties. To maintain membership one must accept the dictums of the sovereign who controls that particular family. She tries to emancipate herself legally. She resists her sovereign legally. She is not only fighting for herself but also for her sister who wishes to die. She finally wins the fight and regains medical rights to her body.

Remy at the beginning is seen typing a story, the central question he asks is how something can be alive and dead at the same time? The statement reflects the idea of double exception as the condition of the person is not stable. The situation of Zoë within the polis is similar as it is neither a part of the polis nor does it escape the polis. The artificial organ users in the movie are closer to Homo Economicus as their economic state denies them the right to life. In the movie Remy and his friend Jake are Repo Men whose job is to get back artificial organs which have not been paid for. The methods used by them are unscientific and result in the person's death.

Situations change after Remy gets an artificial heart transplanted due to trauma. Remy turns into a victim from avictimiser. He is unable to resume repossession as he starts feeling the pain of the people whom he slaughters. The movie shows the uses of both biopolitics and thanatopolitics by the sovereign. Remy tries to evade his pursuers and attempts to assert his subjectivity by narrating his life. He plans to reveal what the corporation does to people who take organs and are unable to repay. His plan is unsuccessful as he sustains a massive injury. After his accident, an artificial neural network is installed and he 'dreams' of his freedom. Remy is finally left in the state of being alive in his dreams though he is invalid in reality.

The three movies show the existence of Zoë and also how Bios is deemed Homo Sacer. The movies also show how the characters try to escape the sovereign. The next part of my paper shall deal with the different biocitizenships in the movie.

Biocitizenships

Biocitizenship is created using bodily similarities. In all movies there are bodily similarities between the characters, the same marks their difference from others. Formation or dissolution of biocitizenships changes the biovalue of a person. The characters try to nullify the difference that the sovereign creates by attempting to change their biovalue. Attempts are made through various means like Art, Narrative and Legal Emancipation.

In the movie *Never Let Me Go*, the characters are already a part of a certain biocitizenship: they exist as a community. The children are ghettoised into schools where they are taught, nourished and nurtured to become organ donors. Their 'profession' is

valorised and deemed 'important'. The clones have minimal interaction with the outside world. The characters are part of a biocitizenship that is formed on the basis of physical similarity. The sovereign tries to ascertain their biovalue using 'the gallery'. Gallery looks at the ethics of organ transplantation by trying to find out whether the clones have souls at all. Having a 'soul' is a marker of biovalue. In this light I read ethics as treatment meted out to people who possess a certain biovalue. Ethics and ethical treatment is denied to everyone who does not possess that biovalue. The shifts in biocitizenships hence can be read as attempts to change biovalue of the characters.

In *My Sister's Keeper*, Anna tries to assert her biovalue as an individual by trying to legally emancipate herself. The movie shows her attempt to become 'human' by fighting for her biovalue. The movie also shows her sister Kate's fight over her body. Kate's mother denies her the right to die and forces her sister to donate organs. Kate is assigned the highest biovalue within that system after being diagnosed with leukaemia. Anna appeals to the higher sovereign (the court) to change her biovalue. There is a change in Anna's biovalue when she establishes an emotional connection to the sovereign (the judge), whereby, she is deemed a normal and rational being capable of making decisions herself. Emotion changes biovalue in this case.

Remy in the *Repo Men*, who is initially a part of the sovereign, is an agent of thanatopolitics as he repossesses organs from donors who fail to pay. After getting an organ himself he becomes a biologic citizen of the donor community and he is unable to resume duty as a Repo Man. Remy is able to feel the pain and plight of the organ users and is unable to kill. The emotion of pain makes changes his biologic citizenship. Emotions arising out of the characters make them aware of their biologic citizenship.

Biopolitics and Thanatopolitics

Biopower, as Kelley says, is governed using Biopolitics while Sovereign uses thanatopolitics. Biopolitics, according to him, seeks control by maximising the biovalue of a population through positive means. Thanatopolitics on the other hand "uses death, or exposure to the risk of death, to keep people in line." All three movies display the use of biopolitics and thanatopolitics to keep people in check.

In *Never Let Me Go*, Biopolitics is used more than Thanatopolitics to keep clones 'docile'. The body-value of the children is maximised using surveillance. Their life style is monitored for maximising their value as organ donors. Children are kept in special schools and stories are created to prevent them from escaping. There are no instances of explicit violence that is perpetrated on them by the sovereign.

In *My Sisters Keeper* thanatopolitics is used more than biopolitics. Emotional violence is perpetrated on Anna by her sovereign (her mother). An instance of biopolitics is when Anna was offered 'treats' after her transfusions. Instances of violence are revealed when the father talks about how Anna had to be held down by a few nurses during procedure and when her mother says that Anna did not fully know what was happening to her. Anna finally appeals to the court for the recognition of her biovalue as a biopolitical citizen under the law of the state.

In *Repo Men* there is a clear distinction between biopolitics and thanatopolitics. Biopolitics is in operation during the sale of the artificial organs. The sovereign presents itself as philanthropic before its customer and create in the customer a sense of

'responsibility' towards themselves. This can be read as an instance of biopolitical governance wherein the subject is made 'aware' of certain duties towards himself. The union undertakes further biopolitical responsibility by offering medical help before extracting organs. The murders are instances of thanatopolitics. The other instances include threatening the donors who have not repaid, persecuting defaulters, and treatment of evaders. Remy's biovalue changes when he himself becomes a recipient of an artificial organ, and he becomes 'Homo Sacer' on non-payment. 'Addition' to the body changes biovalue and non-payment for 'additions' condemns them.

Conclusion

The central argument of my paper is that life is rendered grievable by biopolitics. Difference created by a sovereign power, I argue, is what makes some lives grievable and the others not. The sovereign prevents people from crossing the biopolitical boundaries. The biopolitical boundary marks the beginning of population. Anyone who is within the biopolitical boundary enjoys citizenship rights, while everyone outside it does not have any rights. The sovereign acts as a thanatopolitic force to everyone outside the boundary and acts as a biopolitical system for everyone within. In effect the sovereign, by working in such a fashion, makes it evident that only the lives of the people within the biopolitical boundary are grievable. Anyone and everyone outside it do not matter.

In *Never Let Me Go*, the lives of neither the children nor the adults who are clones matter. The clones are merely kept for the sustenance of that biopolitical society. In *My Sister's Keeper*, Anna is created to be a failsafe body for her sister. Anna is not fully admitted into the biopolitical border of the family and hence does not have complete rights to her body. In *Repo Men*, lives of all characters who have not repaid their dues are deemed non-grievable by 'the union' and they are killed.

To conclude, I argue that it is sovereign power makes lives grievable. The lives of everyone who have been accepted into a biopolitical boundary are grievable and everyone else has a non grievable life.

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“ You are being videotaped, Smile !!!” Everyday life, Power, Surveillance and Freedom in Democratic India

Abstract

Monitoring of people and places is in itself not new now. Vagrants, spies, trouble makers, unemployed individuals, enemies of the state etc who were seen as possible disruptive forces in any society were placed under surveillance by states across human history. In India, we can see the history and importance of surveillance well depicted in Arthashastra by Kautilya. David Lyon defines surveillance as 'a routine and focused attention to personal details for the purposes of influence, management, care and control'. Thus, surveillance is made up of several components: the collection of data, representing this data in particular ways, interpreting those data and producing social hierarchies. Whether through CCTV, ID cards or phone-taps, surveillance is about collecting information about material bodies, single or collective in a society. Surveillance is thus the monitoring of bodies, their behavior, actions, choices, desires and even fears. Whether this involves the recording of individual bodies or group of bodies in malls, airports or traffic islands or the documentation of an individual's browsing lines, surveillance cultures focus on the body behind the action. The process of surveillance has now gone beyond bio-surveillance and has now brought under it the data basing of entire population through the apparatus of DNA, Stem cells, serums and even tissues. Thus the term surveillance has now gained a new semantic scope in this age of globalization. This paper is concentrating on how our everyday life, and freedom is now being affected by the cyclopean eye of technological surveillance hanging above our head like a sword. An attempt will also be made to look into how foucauldian power equations and concepts like panopticism are invisibly getting into the hands of democratic governments like India and implemented through the weapons of surveillance. The everyday life theories of Lefebvre also will be brought under microscopic lens in the paper investigating how the private everyday life and freedom of common men in shopping malls, airports, bus stands, railway stations, supermarkets are being watched under the disguise of safety. Attempt is also made to point fingers towards the 'invisible' ways of technological surveillance to which we are unwarily normalizing our ways of everyday life and space ie., the part played by News papers, Visual and New Media in this attempt of neo-colonization.

Key words: Gender, Power, freedom, tech-surveillance, everyday life, India.

Introduction

Over 1,000 NSG snipers and 44,000 Delhi Police and paramilitary personnel will guard the capital on Republic Day, while 15,000 CCTV cameras will keep watch to ensure a safe visit of chief guest US President Barack Obama.

- ND TV News (January 24, 2015)

Monitoring of people and places is not a new happening in the history of society. Vagrants, spies, troublemakers, unemployed people, enemies of the state and many in the

unending list who were suspected to be possible destructive powers to our society were placed under surveillance by the States across human history. Surveillance might be a simple gathering of data - such as what happens in the case of on-line users. It could be positive when law enforcement people keep an eye on criminals or health authorities look on public health matters. On the other hands, contemporary and common place notions of surveillance treat it as a process to control people, places and dominate using power of surveillance.

We live in an everyday that is saturated by surveillance. The older forms of surveillance were *natural* whereas the modern forms of surveillance is *artificial*. In earlier days surveillance was something one experienced in specific places and under the eye of one person or thing. According to Finn, "earlier surveillance focused on individuals, contemporary surveillance observes entire populations". We are now surveilled not in a centralized manner, but in fragments - as a worker in our offices, as a consumer in supermarkets, as an internet user in an Internet cafe, as a resident in a neighborhood, as a passenger in an airliner or bus or railway station, at an ATM counter - and these fragments in a whole comes together to some database to produce our identity as a whole. HERE, we come to think about a part of our Indian constitution : Article 21: Protection of Life and Personal Liberty: No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law. If we look around our surroundings, then we can see the basic rights of every citizen guaranteed by the Constitution is under serious threat from the powers of surveillance.

Democracy and Everyday life

The older days of surveillance has gone to the back-doors of history. Now the new surveillance monitors entire communities or population under its eyes in order to ensure the safety and security of people. The old *welfare state* concept has now given way to new *security state* concept. Now a days a good citizen is the one who accepts, even seeks mass/public surveillance to its governments for his security. This acceptance or normalization of surveillance to our everyday life can be seen in the model of Election ID cards, AADHAR and NPR Cards. Through these methods of surveillance we place ourselves in 'defensible spaces' - where we *assume* ourselves to be secure. Even in a democratic country like India, where the Government is "of the people", "by the people" and "for the people", we are under surveillance by the state machinery. From the GPRS of our mobile phones to CCTV cameras in bus stands, railway stations, airports our every day life is under the panoptic eye of the 'our' own elected government. The governments are using the weapons of surveillance as the new ways of control of people through invisible power structures by accumulating complete knowledge of their organized/unorganized and legitimate/illegitimate practices in the society they live. Weiser,M said, "the most profound technologies are those that disappear. They weave them-selves into the fabric of everyday life until they are indistinguishable from it". The Governments in India are seeking this ground to make surveillance weapons as a part of everyday of every citizen in our society and make every citizen a 'responsible' citizen in this participatory surveillance of his surroundings.

Every Indian has now become part of this '*participatory surveillance*' which makes the peoples' governments or power structures to snoop into the private life and liberty of the

individual without any force. As Foucault claims, power's source is not something that can be possessed because it lies within individuals. For, Foucault, power is everywhere, it affects the prisoners and the prison guards in its interactions in a society that creates power. Foucauldian notion of bio-power control has now given way to soul-control by the methods of electronic surveillance. The CCTV cameras and Bio-metric systems has created a fear or threat in our minds that makes the soul to get interacted with the invisible power structure of surveillance. The form of power concerning surveillance is structural power because of its ability to control human beings without any communication or physical presence. This new power structure of surveillance has made the modern citizen to act like 'others around him' do. If any violation of majority behavior is done by an individual, the surveillance power offers chances to question the 'rebel' who has made the system or surrounding corrupt. Here again, we come across the question of personal liberty versus public liberty. This technological surveillance through CCTV cameras and Bio-metric systems also gives rise to a new class of power structure - the interpreters of power, the controllers of techno-surveillance who can make any situation complicated and simple. The new interpreters of power has created a new '*prison*' in our society, where the inmates are publicly controlled and privately free.

Foucault's *Panopticon* has now gone beyond the iron bars of prisons. It can be applied to a democratic society like India where we, the 'stupid common man' (as said by Nasrudhin Shah, the famous Bollywood Actor in the Bollywood movie "*A Wednesday*") undeniably accepts the truth that our every action and behavior *is* or *must* be observed. Wherever we walk, whatever shop or mall or bus stand we go in, whatever website we visit, whichever mobile application you download, we accept the truth that we are always watched, or feel like we could be watched or should be watched. The techno-surveillance works the same sense as the Panopticon in a prison where one person can watch or potentially watch many others and all the way into their cells to monitor their actions and behavior. This has led to the generation of a new 'fear' where the people in a society prefer to live in a prison without any iron bars but with the knowledge that his actions are being watched and he has to act according to the normality of the society.

The governments of the modern age, even the democratic ones like India, are now using Bio-metrics and other sources to identify people and track them. The mobiles we carry, the laptops we use are all watched or surveilled by the eyes of the Satellites above us. Thus the '*new Gods on sky*' are now controlling our actions from the space above 'for the Gods on earth' who use it as a power chip to dominate our bio and soul powers. We are thus forced to lead a life to the unwritten rules of surveillance for the fear of being watched and vouched by the Gods above us. Thus the 'fear' of being watched has generated a new set of behavioral notions in the minds of the common people in a society like India.

Welfare State *versus* Safety State

Enough ink has spilled over the need for 'safety' of people in a state after 9/11 incidents world over. India has also joined the rat race of global surveillance soon after the terror attacks on Parliament and other numberless activities of the same all over the country. Public safety has now become the primary concern to any government which comes to power in India. Now we can see a greater investment or care is allotted to ensure public safety than to that of providing basic facilities to poor or needy in the agendas or development programs of

peoples' governments in India. Welfare state has now given way to what David Lyon calls '*the safety state*'. Privacy of individuals has now reached to the hands of governments in the interest of national security and public safety. Governments are now given marks by the common men in elections for the quality of their governance which ensures public safety than that of poverty alleviation or other social security measures. How Delhi had become a hot bed for the rise of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) with the Nirbaya case itself shows us the growing importance given by common man towards public safety than social security. Now governments are surveilled by the public about how effectively or ineffectively they ensure the safety of common men in a society. The election promise in the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) minimum program to install 35,000 CCTV cameras within the city of Delhi itself shows us the growing concerns of public towards their personal safety than social security measures.

The ensuring of public safety has now made the public spaces more public. Individuals have theoretically adjusted themselves to be surveilled in open spaces at the cost of their privacy. They themselves are now becoming part of participatory surveillance rendering their spaces safe by adjusting or normalizing their lives with the tech-surveillance. Henry Lefebvre has called surveillance as a '*real spatial practice*' which is now responsibly manifested by every individual in India. Thus we are now the real '*watch dogs*' who holds the responsibility of our spaces from any intrusion, invasion or illegitimate activity.

Compromising freedom of space for security of life

Ever since the happenings of Mumbai 26/11, Parliament House, Somanath and Akshardham attacks, a shift has happened in the priority of State and Central governments in India to give more importance to public safety than social security. Safety has now gained to be the priority of every government in India and a major shift has happened in the world politics, making way to safety states, than the old maxim of welfare state. Ever since the 9/11 incidents, almost all the governments of the world have now concentrated their attention to provide safety to public spaces. Thus surveillance of public spaces are now interpreted to mean these spaces are safe. Thus, we, common men, have now invisibly become part of the project of governments to make sure we are rendering our responsibility to make public spaces safe by collaborating with the mechanisms of surveillance. Thus surveillance, called as '*real spatial practice*' by Henri Lefebvre invites every citizen as a responsible individual to watch our spaces for intrusions, invasions, illegitimate activity and irresponsible behavior. This responsabilizing through self acclaimed surveillance has made our privacy too public so that we are now rarely enjoying our public spaces due to fear and lack of freedom of being watched by eyes of surveillance.

In India, now a days we can see much hue and cry of creating a '*Digital India*'. Even the Governments at central and state are very eagerly participating in digitalizing the documents to avoid redtapism and provide hassle-free service to its subjects. This office computerization and e-governance systems largely undertaken by the governments in the name of administrative efficiency and economic cost cutting is yet another tool of participatory surveillance to the privacy of public spaces. The gathering of information and updating the movement of the government services and making public to be vigilant in the activities of the day to day routines of the government actions is another weapon used by the power structures to watch, control and interfere in spaces wherever an overview is needed.

Thus supervising the movement of work spaces is yet another idea of surveillance. Thus not only the freedom of the public spaces are compromised, but the work spaces are also under the threat of paradigmatic surveillance in the disguise of ensuring discipline and work efficiency at the cost of 'fear', a pressure technique used by the power structures. Here, the foucauldian notion of panopticism as a weapon in the hands of the power structures have been effectively implemented. The introduction of entry keys in the form of bar-coded id-cards, video surveillance, active badges, GPRS trackers used in private work spaces are also to become common in the hands of the coming governments to ensure the mobility of the work spaces in the name of ensuring the 'safety' and 'security' of the subjects even in a Democratic country like India. The silence of the citizens, frightened by the Governments in the name of fear of 'unknown' enemies makes them a part in the surveillance at the cost of their freedom of every day life.

The Governments in India are now expanding their hands to the privacies of the public and private spaces by planting CCTV in almost all the possible places of mass footsteps. The so-called 'stupid common man' is of the belief that somehow they – and their future generation – are safer with the cameras installed above them. Governments are issuing public notices as 'statutory warning' in National Highways, Bus stands, Railway stations, Shopping malls that your actions are videotaped. This has led to the generation of a new code of conduct and discipline in the public behavior of the citizens in India. The news papers and social media too applaud the moves of the Governments to ensure 'safety' of its citizens by 'opening an omnipotent eye' above their heads. The popular culture also plays its participatory part in the surveillance attempts of the Governments by sorting out examples of burglars and murderers caught red-handed by the installing of CCTV cameras in public and work spaces. But, the real truth and intentions of the governments are being crushed under the footsteps of common men. The man who smiles at the CCTV cameras with a relief of safety is forgetting one important rule of his life – he is now not the 'free bird' as he was once. His freedom is now in chains. He is yet to recognize the presence of the new 'policing' done in/visibly through the eyes of CCTV cameras.

Everyday life inside/outside social Panopticon

Nikolas Rose has quoted Panopticon to Foucault as being "the diagram of a political technology, one that was individualizing, normalizing, based on perpetual surveillance, classification, a kind of uninterrupted and continuous judgment enabling the government of multiplicities, reducing the resistant powers of human bodies at the same time as it maximized their economic and social utility' (Rose 1999:187). Governments are using the surveillance techniques like Biometric, AADHAR, NPR cards as tools to follow some of the underlying processes of Panopticon. As Foucault himself has said, 'visibility is a trap' (Foucault 1979:200), the Governments are using the surveillance techniques like CCTV, AADHAR, NPR as visible and invisible traps to enhance their power on the bio and soul powers of the citizens of the country. The 'forcing' of the individuals of India to link their AADHAR/NPR cards to their bank accounts to avail subsidies of Gas and other concessions is a simple example of the enhancement of the tentacles of surveillance directly to the financial and economic mobility of the citizens of India.

In his work *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault, 1979) Foucault has effectively introduced

the idea of surveillance taking place in enclosed spaces - prisons, workplaces, schools - where people are confined. Each of these spaces have its own automatic powers to contain, control, shape and include subjects within its systems. Modern governments are now working to the systems thought by Foucault above by suggesting to develop self-discipline to its subjects through various panoptic methods. The 'fear' of being watched in common and public spaces has now developed a notion in the mind of the common man to 'do the right thing' as demanded by the space. Thus this development of inner compulsion to do the right thing the governments want has now led to the creations of the desired 'docile bodies' in a society like India.

In a modern democratic society like India, the governments' attempts to bring 'discipline' has now failed and attempts are now going to 'control' the bio and soul powers of individuals in a society. To 'control' the bio-soul powers, now governments are using the help of social surveillance of public spaces. In his 'Postscript on the Societies on control', Deleuze has very systematically sketched the shift from 'discipline' to 'control' (Deleuze, 1992). Deleuze has gone beyond the Foucauldian notion of surveillance in 'confined' places to 'visible' sites of surveillance. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri in their work *Empire* has attempted to draw the 'crisis of governments' worldwide to face the general turning against established authority which is a net result of this 'post-disciplinary' situation (Hardt and Negri 2000). As a result a shift has now happened in the view points of governments world over. They are now no longer trying to rely on inner compulsions through techniques of 'discipline', but to 'control' the bodies through the digital techniques available in a world of globalization.

Gender Biased Bio and Tech Surveillance in India

Coleman and McCahill (2011) has specifically remarked that one of the major social impacts of surveillance is demarcating and reinforcing social 'borders' in a society. Racial and Gender categories are often manifested as one of the margins who are policed by surveillance, where the eyes of surveillance are disproportionately targeted on a 'marked' section of the society. In a free, democratic nation like India we can often see this gender bias in surveillance. The traditional forms of person-to-person surveillance kept on women are now giving way to new tech-surveillance.

The surveillance on the body and psyche of women is being practiced in India. In countries like Saudi Arabia, communication providers notify male relatives or guardians by SMS of whenever their wives or other dependents left or arrived in the country. In India, now a days because of the growing insecurity on safety of women, parents or 'guardians' are installing tracking devices and smart phone spy-wares, bugs and GPS trackers on the belongings of their wards. The control on the physical and psychological realm of a particular section of the society automatically leads to the creation of a 'conscious other' in the society. The 'conscious other' being in the line of control in the hands of their 'guardians', usually men, leads to unequal power relations between men and women in the society. The surveillance of women by men reinforces the existing power imbalances in a society like India.

In a country like India, we now witness the growing interception of State machineries in the freedom of its citizens. The controversy related to the reported surveillance done on a young woman of Gujarat has tainted the image of some prominent leaders including our

current Prime Minister Sri. Narendra Modi and his Lieutenant Amit Shah, who was the then minister of Gujarat during the time of 2014 elections in India. Hence, the state surveillance, when its target is a women, often takes a specific gendered form. The old maxim that 'a man's home is his castle', which seems to be a manifestation of the right to privacy and undue scrutiny is in another way denying the safety of women from domestic abuses in their homes. Women, should reclaim their 'right to privacy' against unwanted surveillance into their lives to give them the freedom to live, express and enjoy their right.

Surveillance technologies are often considered as impersonal in their way of function. But in a country like India, we often speak about the 'safety' of women and use the tech-surveillance as an easier way to look into the privacy of women, denying them the basic constitutional rights to live. The physical and tech-surveillance of women is widely accepted as legitimate practice in India. The involvement of the state machineries to peep into the lives of citizens has increased in India since the Nirbhaya case of Delhi. Sara Ahmed (2000) has remarked about the surveillance gaze done on the society as “the 'good citizen is the one who watches (out for) suspicious persons and strangers, and who in that very act, becomes aligned, not only with the police (and hence the Law) but with the imagined community itself whose boundaries are protected in the very labor of his look.” In India, often the 'good citizen' is peeping his surveillance gaze towards the 'privacy' of the women than his neighborhood man. The surveillant staring of men in India on women in public spaces often undermines the gendered bias of Bio surveillance legitimately practiced in India. As Foucault's (1977) work argues, those who look or stare are invested with power, while those who are subject to the gaze enjoy less relative power. Thus Bio and Tech-surveillance emerges as apparatus in the hands of the patriarchal society and the governments to envisage their power on a particular gendered section of the society in India.

Conclusion

Foucault has always considered power as productive in the sense that it shapes and molds people, their values and their practices. There are constraints involved in the process of power production, rules and regulations for rewarding and punishing good and bad work. Once a knowledge of the repressive ideas of power is gained, the reasons of repression can be solved only through a greater knowledge and understanding of the repressive ideas of power. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault writes '...there is no power relations without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations' (Foucault 1979). All the governments in the world have almost recognized the relationship between knowledge and power constitutions and has 'practically' used it to their upper hand by using the techniques of surveillance technology. The realization of the 'effective knowledge' of the everyday life of the citizens of the country has now made all type of governments, democratic or autocratic or federal, as repressive forces of powers in our world of globalization.

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From Gendered Subalternity and Marginality to Gendered Revolution and Empowerment: Mao Dun's "Creation" as an Epitome of *Nora-ism*.

Abstract

"It is no exaggeration to say that the women's movement in the May Fourth period is nothing but Noraism ... Nora's spirit to 'be a human being,' her realisation that besides being a mother and wife she is a person, and her idea of 'the responsibilities she as a person has' are all healthy, progressive thoughts, even for us today." - Mao Dun, 1938.

Mao Dun's revolutionary short story "Creation" reflects the iconoclastic spirit of Chinese May Fourth Period, expresses the female personality liberation movement, and criticizes the male chauvinistic mentality - to change the female destiny under the thumb of culturally institutionalized patriarchy. It explores the New Woman and exposes the transformations that redefine the gendered identities under the discourse of cultural modernity dominated by maleficent system. It dramatises the construction of female intellectual's self-identity and feminine Nora-esque dominance over malevolent hegemony. It invokes the traditional discourses of female virtue versus the revolutionary discourses of female enlightenment with the influence of dominated male-driven discourses on revolution and modernisation. It reveals the contradictions inherent in male-guided modernisation project that socially prescribed the female gender identities and the complex relationships between traditional culture norms and contemporary iconoclastic ideals. The aim of the researcher is to identify the masculine dominance over female identity, and examine the resurrection of female gender from patriarchy.

"Creation" contextualizes the reinforcement of gender stratification, gender bifurcation consciousness, gender terminology, intersectionality, and conflict theory in culture by highlighting gender bending, gender dynamics, and gender configuration. It represents the female political potency and male castration anxiety; and contradicts the hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity. It deploys extreme male power since Junshi (the male dominated husband) wants 'to create' a doll-like subordinate Xianxian (the gendered subaltern wife) for his personal gratification. For him, she is not a human being with her own unique identity, but a performer for his desires and fulfilments. Initially, he convinces her about his "ideal" dream-like woman with his influence, but finally, she shatters his "ideal" with her own interpretations and findings. Here, the husband envisages an image of the superior-Self in the inferior-Other and establishes a discursive control over his female counterpart for maintaining his coherent identity as a modern male. But, the wife subverts the authority of masculine position and challenges the male gender power. Junshi acts as a colonizer with his Calibanistic motto in creating an "ideal" Xianxian for his personal whims, and thereby her individual self identity is colonized and destroyed. "Creation" is a paradoxical discourse of masculine anxiety about feminism. "Creation" is examined with the nexus of theory and politics of Judith Butler's 'gender trouble and performativity,' Elaine Showalter's 'female malady and gender wilderness,' Dorothy Smith's 'gender bifurcation consciousness,' and Patricia Collins's 'domination matrix and epistemology.'

Key Words: Gendered Subalternity, Gendered Revolution, Gender Performativity, Gender Malady, Gender Power, Nora-ism.

“Silence from and about the subject was the order of the day. Some of the silences were broken, and some were maintained by authors who lived with and within the policing strategies. What I am interested in are the strategies for breaking it” (3).

-Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark*.

Mao Dun's “Creation” announces the conflict and revolutionary resistance of the Chinese Creation society and the transformative response and empowerment of the May Fourth Movement. “Creation” intervenes in the democratic struggle between creativity and transformation via gendered revolution and empowerment. The creative short fiction functions “to inspire hope: hope for change, hope for freedom, hope for the future” and “it affirms that another world is possible” (3). “Creation” itself acts as the “stepping beyond” (3) with never ending “revolving” and “spiraling of hope” (4). It works with Bruno Latour's “immanence” (181) “on the threshold of a transformed state of being” (5). As Salman Rushdie puts it: “this ... is how newness enters the world” (395). The story of “Creation” revolves around the male dominant protagonist Junshi's musings regarding his intentional marriage with the female subaltern protagonist Xianxian in order to 're-make' her potential for his 'ideal' woman. His ideal woman has to coincide with his personal temperament and opinions, and compliment his self-image of modern man of intellect. He wants, “Xianxian his young maternal cousin” (19). Purposefully, he succeeds in 'creating' his 'ideal' since the society fails in preparing her for him as he comments, “...since society hasn't produced an ideal wife for me, I mean to create one!” (19). He metamorphoses Xianxian, and transforms her from traditional attitudes to modern thoughts during their initial wed-lock days. Docile Xianxian obeys Junshi's orders, but she emerges into difference of opinions and deviates from Junshi's opinions when her horizons widen. Her political activism develops beyond Junshi's imagination, and instead of becoming his feminine equivalent, she develops a unique individuality and integrity with personal dignity. Hence, Junshi recognizes his creative failure since the story ends with Xianxian's departure. It is evident from Junshi's words, “I wanted to make an ideal woman of you, and that was the start of making my dream come true, so I was buoyed up by hope but didn't achieve real happiness” (14). Because “You changed in to yourself, not the ideal woman I wanted to make you...I can't believe that one book can have two different interpretations” (15). And “...what I've taught you. And so you've destroyed yourself! Destroyed my ideal!” (15). In “Creation,” the male chauvinist husband wants 'to create' a doll-like sub-ordinate wife for his personal satisfaction. So that, he 'creates' his wife with the specific qualities he wants from her. For him, she is not a human being with her own unique identity, but a performer for his desires and fulfilments. Here, the extreme excursion of 'gender power' is witnessed through oppression strategies and domination matrix.

“Creation” sketches the authentic attitude differences in husband and wife, Junshi and Xianxian through specific and outstanding characteristics. With the elements of eloquence, Dun uses extraordinary and dramatic dictums intentionally in his characterization. He employs rhetorical terminologies such as antithesis, hyperbaton, hypotaxis, parataxis, paradox, litotes, epanalepsis, irony, and pun in his linguistic acquisition. The two complex and condensed character portrayals of the two contradictory and conflicting genders are

illustratively expressed through the textual verbal jugglery.

Apparently, Junshi represents realistic, unromantic, and futuristic, with creative and insinuating urge; having personal views, ideals, and dreams. He accepts cultural heritage, respects Chinese background and doesn't accept foreign culture. He is dominative, determinative, and conservative, with forceful and practical nature, and contrary or contradictory behaviour. He is self-restrained, influential and victorious, with regressive mentality, resentment, and dispassionate disapproval. He criticises and insists, with ascendancy, establishment, and ensures sabotage tactics, bitter sensation, and silent communion. He is proud, satisfied and choosy, and silent and cunning, with ordering nature. He remoulds and restores, tunes and tames, creates and makes and duties as a trainer. Junshi's feelings towards Xianxian fills with a mixture of sweetness and bitterness, love, resentment, and pity. He considers her with foolish fancies and wishes her to be with ideal politics, demonstrative expressions and powerful stimuli. He likes her with moderate, inculcative and cultivative views, without extremes, but with enigmatic smile and heredity. He wants her to be powerful in political science, knowledgeable about important dates and names, current affairs and events, women's movements, blue stockings and suffragettes and international trends. He wishes her to be bold, strong, inductive and unlively in character and he generates her interest in evolution, materialism and nihilism, without idealism. Junshi says that Xianxian is dull and insipid. He comments Xianxian: "Symbol of modernism" (27) and with a "complex character" (29). He wishes in her, an "uncut jade which I can carve myself" (19). These are his "criteria for "ideal wife" (16).

On the contrary, Xianxian represents responsive, reluctant, repulsive and resistant with quite refinement, and reconciliation. She is impatient, intelligent, victorious, youthful, childish and materialistic with formless soul, mechanical romance, artificial smile and goodness. She depicts her freedom of action, prejudices, dangerous thoughts and extremes, broad mindedness, political activism, independent values, revolutionary ideas, new identity, metamorphosis, estrangement, different opinions, fighting nature, disagreements, disputes, trifles, arguments and tactical tiffs. She has charming, strong and sensual stimuli with wealth, rank, reward, fame, power, domain, beauty, complete triumphant and winner's satisfaction. She shows interests in women and politics, social politics and affairs, with radical and subversive views, half-baked ideas and actions, foolish politics and consolation. She displays hysterical character with hidden grief, regret or reproach, unhappiness, tears, anxiety and hesitation. Her unsatisfied and sacrificed life is due to her unconventional aversion to politics, anguish of defeat and happy acceptance of fate. Xianxian dislikes politics and reading newspapers, but exhibits dangerous transcendentalist and revolutionary trend. She appears philosophical and unconventional, timid and lively, with public inhibitions and bashfulness and embarrassment and gentleness. She is an excellent student, learned, reader and unconventional scholar, with clear head, forthrightness and circumspection. She manifests Chinese background, higher understanding of natural sciences, history and literature, modern trends of thought and with refined behaviour, cultivated speech and extensive knowledge. She is talented and pretentious, with happy-go-lucky temperament, less emotional, pretensions, old-fashioned coyness and passiveness. She contradicts her public expressions and devotions, with introvert versus extrovert behaviours and serves as a good housekeeper. Xianxian's disapproval towards Junshi is portrayed, "...It's you who destroyed your ideal?' Or 'you summoned up a demon but can't control it'... You succeeded. I haven't gone against you. Aren't I going in the direction you mapped out? I may actually be a

step ahead of you, but we're going in the same direction" (25). "I've done all you asked. Been influenced by you in all my thoughts and actions...you should be proud of being such a good tutor. You've cured me of my happy-go-lucky ways, made me keen on politics, made me what I am today; but now you disapprove of me...you're like the Taoist Huang who invoked a devil" (25). The 'loss of self' is well-knitted in "Creation" with an 'alienation effect' to female marginalized identity. Xianxian comments, "...I really have transcended the world, forgetting my own existence and the existence of others" (22).

Junshi's ideal woman is a tangle of contradictions: without preconceived ideas and with cultural heritage of five thousand years of Chinese history and traditions, quintessential education, modern feminine conduct and intellectual, but traditional without threatening his masculine dominance. Xianxian's scornful sayings, "...there was something revoltingly traditional about "husband," inevitably suggesting a patriarch, and it should be changed to "sweetheart." So here, too, it was taboo!" (33) Junshi polices the gender 'power over' Xianxian and performs his identity in the gendered hierarchy of the dominant 'superior-Self' in the subaltern 'inferior-Other.' R. W. Connell argues, gender power navigates from "hegemonic masculinity and emphasized femininity" (831), and the single pattern of power or the reproductive arena resembles the global dominance of men over women. With Gayatri Spivak's observation, 'She' (Xianxian, the female subaltern agent) "is worlding their own world, which is far from mere uninscribed earth, anew, by obliging them to domesticate the alien as Master," as a process generating the force to make the oppressed see herself as the inferior-Other (253). Gender power depicts the pulsating and heart-throbbing infra-human experiences within malevolent and maleficent system that enunciates a hypothetical ex-nihilo. Gender promotes an unconstitutional in-stigma with monolithic social structure and without an action and staunch opposition for the atrocity. Hegemonic masculinity, emphasized femininity, institutionalized ethnography, and culturally installed patriarchy birth the gender power and oppression olympics.

"Creation" ensures Dawn's statement, the women's movement . . .at its deepest it is not an effort to play "catch-up" with the competitive, aggressive "dog-eat-dog" spirit of the dominant system. It is rather, an attempt to convert men and the system to the sense of responsibility, nurturance, openness and rejection of hierarchy that are part of our vision. As Hilary Chung notes, Junshi tactically adopts traditional discourses about feminine virtue and experiments the 'creature of imagination' with Xianxian to maintain his position of judgement through political and cultural acquaintances. The discursive manoeuvring enables the expression of the male intellectual's 'castration anxiety' regarding their political potency and authority during the tumultuous May Fourth Period and their literary competence with the revolutionary 'New Woman.' (165-183) The term 'Nora' generates from Henrik Ibsen's problem play, *A Doll's House* and thus Noraism resembles Ibsenism. Chinese Nora era crystallized in 1935 with Chinese feminism and blatant denial of Confucian canon with rectification. Nora represents the New Woman, the symbol of feminism, the women's liberation movement and the spiritual rebellion for orthodoxy, independence and freedom to women's life. Noraism denotes the cry for women to break with the family and seek individual freedom. Nora or New Woman is ironically a symptom of male fears about feminism. The male gender power of coercion reflects against the female gender struggle between 'freedom from' domination and 'freedom to' revolution. Thus, the 'dangerous Noras,' (Xianxian) are killed, punished or labelled as evil as a means of reasserting the male control since they are the 'dangerous Saviours,' (Junshi) of the gendered female subalterns. In Hu

Shi's *Life's Great Event*, Nora's final dialogue ponders Noramania, "Now I shall act like a human being... I do not believe that women may not marry again when men are free to do so. Mine is the command of my conscience... My duties are those of a human being. To follow you blindly is not filial piety" (198).

The concept 'Calibanism' is paradoxical in "Creation" since both Junshi and Xianxian attribute the Calibanistic behaviour in different ways: Junshi is the 'colonizing power' and Xianxian is the 'exercising power.' "Creation" culminates with "His wife- his sweetheart- had sneaked away like a rebel from a tailing detective!" (34). "Only the scratches on the word "husband" on its white belly swayed more clearly than ever before him" (35). The 'liberation' Junshi desires for Xianxian serves as an ornament for his personal delectation and ironically the 'tit for tat' aftermaths, "She's gone on ahead, she wants you to catch up... If you can't catch up with her she won't wait" (34). Xianxian ultimately subverts the authority of the masculine position and challenges the established gender ideologies and oppressor's targets in which 'the male' exists independently. Jin Feng points, "Creation" reveals the contradictions inherent in the male-guided modernisation project, socially prescribed female gender identities and male gender hierarchies and the complex relationships between the traditional culture norms and contemporary iconoclastic ideals. The gendered subaltern Xianxian "is looking back at something lost, acknowledging perhaps, that 'being a woman' was only a brief moment in her life" (62) with a self-reflective web of identification that "hoping to catch a glimpse of herself as others see her" (65). As Michele Montrelay insists in, *Inquiry into Femininity*, the interpretation of sexuality structures, and pass into gender discourse (65).

"Creation" is here critically examined through Judith Butler's 'gender trouble and performativity,' Elaine Showalter's 'female malady and gender wilderness,' Dorothy Smith's 'gender bifurcation consciousness' and Patricia Collins's 'domination matrix and epistemology.' Butler asserts, "There is no gender identity behind the expression of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (34). She believes that the gender is performative and not original. As she comments, gender is rather an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted as an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts and the gendered reality is created through sustained social performances (140-5). Showalter's female malady is about the politics of interpretation and psychological power of gender with literary madness and associated with sexual anarchy and gender wilderness represents the cultural theory with concepts of perceptions, silence and silencing in culture. She advocates new feminine cultural perspective with in male and female tradition. Smith's bifurcation consciousness underscores that the subordinate groups are conditioned to view the world from the perspective of the dominant group. The split or separation establishes "two modes of knowing, experiencing, and acting-one located in the body and in the space that it occupies and moves into, the other passing beyond it" (587). Collins's domination matrix refers to the ideological belief in superior and inferior notions with intersectional epistemologies. Collins's disciplinary domain consists of bureaucratic organizations that controls and organizes human behaviour through routinization, rationalization, and surveillance. So the matrix of domination is expressed through organizational protocol that hides the effects of racism and sexism under the canopy of efficiency, rationality, and equal treatment. The idea of gender power is at the root of the concept of gender empowerment. Gender power practises with diverse implications in "Creation": The 'power to' supports decision-making authority, capacity building and leadership and solves problems with creativity. The 'power with' involves organizational

management, social mobilization and achieves collective alliances and coalitions. The 'power within' refers to self confidence and consciousness, self awareness and assertiveness and relates experience and influence. The 'power over' involves conflict and confrontation between domination/subordination and invites active and passive resistance.

“Creation” contemplates an epitome of Noraism with its meta-representational strategy and thereby distorts the misconceptions about gender power, shackles away the misinterpretations of gender ideologies, confronts in to a positive transformation of an egalitarian world and cultivates the resistive and passive creativity of power and empowerment. As a testimonial key-note quote, “Nneora: An African Doll's House” tackles the *Nores-que* tendency to tangle a transformative resistance to gender power in diverse culture, “Nneora wake up! We actually have rights! It is just that we have been brought up in a hypocritical society where men gang up to steal everything that belongs to us, including our God- given right of existence. And you know what bothers me most? For centuries, we women have silently endorsed this social gang-up” (145).

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Who Calls the 'Cut'? : A Study of the Permutations of Power in Mahesh Dattani's *Tara*

Abstract

*According to Foucault “power is everywhere” and it is “the multiplicity of force relations immanent in a sphere”. The force relations are more or less the constructions of the society or the culture. For Foucault, power is always in state of flux, i.e. from one point to another it changes. It is not something solid and cannot be controlled by an individual or an institution. There is no fixed centre point for the power and this prospect of Foucault was accepted by Derrida. Mahesh Dattani's play *Tara* is a beguiling play that questions society's role in treating the children, Tara and Chandan, who experienced the warmth of the same womb in two different ways. Nature conjoined the twins and it is the culture that demands their separation. It is the body which allows the play's progression. Every event in the play is based on the body and the exercise of power by different “force relations”. This paper endeavours to focus on the power shift in Dattani's *Tara*, which presents the gender discrimination in the patriarchal society. The paper reads body as a motive of narrative writing and studies the power play in the play. The study analyses how power shifts from one hand to the other at every next moment and draws parallel with the precepts of Foucault and Derrida. Inside the play there is a play: a play of power and it plays indifferent levels. The power- “moving substrate of force relations” like gender, body, community, money, silence, and ethics, in a phallogocentric society are discussed in this course of study. The paper explores body as a site where power is worked out and how that power permutations gift Tara a tragic end.*

Key words: Power, body, nature, culture, society, patriarchy, gender, silence, power shift.

Getting the body into writing is a key concern of literature throughout the ages. And conversely, getting writing onto the body is a sign of the attempt to make the physical body into a signifying body. The discussions on the body in literature is essentially enthralling, because of the superficial distance and tension between the two. There is a complex tension between “nature” and “culture”, which coexists with the sense that both are interdependent. According to Peter Brooks, “In imaginative literature the body has always been an object of fascination, at once the distinct other of the world, takes a stand outside materiality- and in some sense its vehicle (this living hand that writes), perhaps even its place of inscription” (1). In his book *Body Work*, Peter Brooks addresses the question of the body in different modes, which allows “a broad semantic range for body”- as biological entity, psycho-sexual construction, and cultural product to writers and readers. He argues that “modern narratives appear to produce a semioticization of the body which is matched by a somatization of story: a claim that the body must be a source and locus of meanings, and that the stories cannot be told without making the body a prime vehicle of narrative signification” (xii).

Mahesh Dattani is the most powerful and effective dramatic voice in the contemporary Indian English dramatic world. With his new-fangled experiments and innovations he has enhanced and blown up the tradition of Indian Drama. The literary scenario begins to change with the arrival of Mahesh Dattani. His plays are, originally, written in English. He

has authored a good number of dramas with diverse themes, techniques and devices. Moreover, his plays have been produced on the stage very successfully. Dattani has an eccentric approach to the theatre. He treats the theatre as the medium to manifest the cause of the unprivileged segments of our society. His plays externalize the problems and repressed feeling of the subalterns in a very reliable and realistic manner. In his plays, Dattani visits untraversed and unmapped soil of homosexuals, HIV positive, eunuchs, physically challenged people etc. By touching up radical themes, he calls it as 'invisible issues', (Dattani 329) like gay themes, child sexual abuse, eunuch etc., he has greatly expanded new horizons in Indian English drama.

Mahesh Dattani's play *Tara* is a beguiling play that questions society's role in treating the children, Tara and Chandan, who experienced the warmth of the same womb in two different ways. Tara is the most touching three-act stage play by Dattani. The play revolves around the theme of favouring the boy and glowering upon the girl with exceptional originality of commencement. The playwright brings arguments against the parents' preference for the boy child at the cost of girl child. The play holds much implication in the present-day society, especially when the government and other NGO's are holding programmes and rallies for creating awareness among people against female foeticide. Dattani is the spokesman of the unprivileged section of our society. He has examined and analysed the problems of women, children, eunuchs and minorities in his plays. His works offer a fine study from socio-psychological dimensions. He presents socio-political realities of contemporary time. He has redefined the tradition of Indian English theatre with his innovative art and craft.

Nature conjoined the twins and it is the culture that demands their separation. It is the body which allows the play's progression. Every event in the play is based on the body and the exercise of power by different "force relations". This paper endeavours to focus on the power shift in Dattani's *Tara*, which presents the gender discrimination in the patriarchal society. The paper reads body as a motive of narrative writing and studies the power play in the play. The study analyses how power shifts from one hand to the other at every next moment and draws parallel with the precepts of Foucault and Derrida. Inside the play there is a play: a play of power and it plays in different levels. The power- "moving substrate of force relations" like gender, body, community, money, silence, and ethics, in a phallogocentric society are discussed in this course of study. The paper explores body as a site where power is worked out and how that power permutations gift Tara a tragic end. According to Foucault "power is everywhere" and it "must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them" (92). The force relations are more or less the constructions of the society or the culture. For Foucault, power is always in state of flux, i.e. from one point to another it changes. It is not something solid and cannot be controlled by an individual or an institution. There is no fixed centre point for the power and this prospect of Foucault was accepted by Derrida. In his book *The History of Sexuality* (Vol. 1) Foucault says:

Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere. And "Power," insofar as it is permanent, repetitious, inert, and self-reproducing, is simply the over-all effect that emerges from all these mobilities, the concatenation that rests on each of

them and seeks in turn to arrest their movement. One needs to be nominalistic, no doubt: power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society. (93)

Throughout the play there is shift in power relations. The opening setting of the play itself shows this. Lowest level, which occupies a major portion of the stage, representing Patel's house. Next level a "represents the bedsitter of the older Chandan in a suburb of London". Doctor Thakkar is placed on the higher level, "his connection is asserted by his sheer God-like presence" (323). The lowest level is only "in memory" and the second level is "the only realistic one". Here the doctor is placed symbolically, because it was he who was the decision maker in separating the conjoined twins- Tara and Chandan. This shows the power politics in a society. A doctor exercises more power in a society, because of his knowledge. Foucault in his *Archaeology of Knowledge*, discusses this and for him knowledge is power. The person who has knowledge (the questions of the reliability of knowledge still continues) has the power to dominate others who do not possess it. Dr Thakkar exercises power in the society with his knowledge, at the same time it is to be noted that when it comes to Tara, in Patel's family, especially over Chandan she exercises power through her knowledge. When Bharati brings milk for Tara she says "sorry new places slow down my peristalsis" (325). Several incidents in the play show this shift in power with knowledge. Some other incidents show Chandan's power with knowledge over Roopa. Power represses, according to Foucault. At certain point Roopa also exercises power with her knowledge of the story of Patel family and milk. There is always a flux in power. Knowledge, fuelled by power, is in this way continuously updated and refreshed, seemingly without ultimate purpose. The power of knowledge also is not static in the play, it undergoes permutations. Foucault's precepts on power and knowledge can be evident in this scenario, "Relations of power-knowledge are not static forms of distribution, they are "matrices of transformations." " (99)

Each incident in the play presents the power play. At one point one person exercises power and the next moment it is handed over to another person, i.e, it is not static. Bharati by bribing Roopa to be Tara's best friend, with "charlie bottles, lipsticks, magazines", exercises power over Roopa and sometimes silences her also. In the play, though Bharati dotes on her daughter Tara, she insensitively attributes a piece of her daughter to the son. The conflict between illusion and reality is yet again echoed here. What is actually a public display of attention on part of the mother is actually a screen to shield her guilt. The context also serves as a satire on the self-sufficient Indian male, for whom, to accept anything feminine is beneath his dignity, and an indelible question mark on his masculinity. Conscience pricks her throughout her life, her role in separating her children who experienced the warmth and protection of her own womb, and ends up in lunacy. She tries to do away with the guilty feeling by donating her kidney to Tara, but Patel does not allow her to do that, because he does not want Bharati "to have the satisfaction of doing it" (344). Again it shows the power play in the patriarchal society. Bharati is not allowed to take decision in her daughter's life and also not allowed to take decisions about her own body. Patel says, "You are in no condition to be taking major decisions" (344).

Even Dan acknowledges the same, as he writes the play. Though the craft of the play is his, he has to borrow the material from Tara. In Tara, the deformity of the Woman is caused by the Man, and caused in order to complete the Man. The playwright utilizes the motif

symbolically as well. This is the reason why Tara approaches her end more quickly, and it is not owing to her inferiority. Most of the scenes present Patel exercising his power on Bharati, blaming and accusing her of lunacy and slapping her. He silences her till the end. The story narrated by Patel over the separation of the conjoined twins is not that reliable. He is silencing Bharati and Bharati has no voice in the play. So how far narration is reliable?

Another character whom exercises power in play is Bharati's father. He is not presented in the play directly. There are only some references in the about this character. His power of wealth plays an important role in the physical separation of the children. The power is worked out on the body again with the force relation like wealth. This character is a representative of patriarchal society and it's on his decision and power the 'cut' was made between the children. Society gives much consideration to the health and identity of the boy child and it is this society who called for the cut. From Patel's conversation grandfather's power is evident. He says, "her father is a wealthy man. An industrialist and an MLA. He might have become chief minister if he had lived. He had power" (377).

Dr Thakkar's statement "our greatest challenge would be to keep the girl alive. Nature wanted to kill her. We couldn't allow it." (376), is contradicted. It puts the question whether the nature or culture want to kill her. It is the culture, in which he is a part, wants to kill her, but he puts the blame on nature. Nature joined the twins and the society demands for their separation, which results in both physical and emotional separation. Dan's words reflect how the wound of separation from his sister affects his mind. He says:

This isn't fair to Tara. She deserves something better. She never got a fair deal. Not even from nature. Neither of us did. Maybe God never wanted us to be separated. Destiny desires strange things. We were meant to die and our mortal remains preserved in formaldehyde for future generations to study. Our purpose in life was maybe that. Only that. But even God does not always get what he wants. Conflict is the crux of life. A duel to the death between God and nature on one side and on the other- the amazing Dr Thakkar.(330)

The opening lines by Tara reflects the idea how society exercises the power and how body becomes a site where power is worked out. She says "and me. Maybe we still are. Like we've always been. Inseparable. The way we started in life. Two lives and one body, in one comfortable womb. Till we are forced out.." (235).

Dr Thakkar and the parents have taken decision in giving identity to the children. The gender concepts prevailing in the society, that is treating a male child superior to the female child, forces them to give physical completeness to Chandan thereby giving a deformity to Tara. A child's gender identity and sexuality is ultimately decided by the doctor and the parents who "problematized within the relationship established between doctor and parents (in the form of advice, or recommendations to keep the child under observation, or warnings of future dangers)" (Foucault 99). In the play *Tara*, Dattani presents the gender discrimination and the 'force relations' dominant in a patriarchal society that exercises the power in the identity of the conjoined twins.

The twins were happy with their conjoined legs, but the society calls cut and separated them. Even after their separation their identities have been questioned by the society. The conjointment of their body was first seen as a deformity by society and their family, but after the surgery also the children were looked as symbols of deformity. Tara gloomily says

They were all running across the street, laughing their ugly heads off over something. When they saw me get off the car, they stopped. They stopped running and they stopped laughing. And they waited, watching me get off and walk across the footpath towards them. Embarrassing me, making me go slower than I would. When I reached they grinned. . . she stared at my leg. . . laughing even harder. (335)

The progression of the play is based the developments and changes on the body, the conjoined body and separated body. The play manifests the power relations in the society and the author uses body as a site where the power relations work out. The power relations or the 'force relations' are always in a play which are always in a state of flux, because "the organizing principle of the structure would limit what we might call the *play* of the structure." (Derrida 1)

It is the body acts as a site for this power play. The disability symbolizes the predicament of girls in Indian families who are made to forsake their chances of getting educated as the edification of the boy becomes a priority. The identity crisis of the children is a major theme Dattani brings in the play. This theme is also narrated through the medium of body. It is the body which redefines the identity of the conjoined twins. From early Western literary tradition body plays an important role in narrative. Peter Brooks brings the famous example in the *Odyssey*. When Odysseus returns in disguise to his palace in Ithaca- now in the hands of the profligate suitors of Penelope- he is first recognised by the old nurse Eurykleia. According to Brooks "it is not only an intellectual recognition, but rather a dramatic finding-out from and on the body itself" (2). Like that the children's identity lies on the signing of the body. The conjointment of their body is the author's tool for narration. He is marking the body with disability that becomes the subject matter for narration and it acts like a "linguistic signifier". The sign or mark imprints the body, making it as a part of signification. The marking or signing if the body signifies "its passage into writing, its becoming a literary body, generally also a narrative body, in that the inscription of the sign depends on and produces a story" (Brooks 3). The signing of the body is an allegory of the body become a subject for literary narrative- a body entered into writing. So in the play *Tara* body is an integral part of narration, it acts as a site where power is played out. Mahesh Dattani puts a question for his readers, whether it is nature or culture which calls the 'cut'?

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Powerful Impact of Children's Literature on Children: A Study Based on J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter Series*

Abstract

The world continues to change and germinate, and houses various powers that govern human life and behaviour; children's literature power is one among them. Children's literature means the literature about children, which is written for children and young adults who are the targeted audience and readers. It is an umbrella term that encompasses various literary elements with different definitions, different sub genres that differentiate it from other genres of literatures on the level of forms and contents and plays a crucial role in achieving and fulfilling children's educational as well as social objectives. The power and influence of children's literature can be analysed and justified in social, cultural, moral, ethical, traditional, and educational context. Children's literature – like any other form of literature – is always closely connected to the socio-historical conditions under which it is written. It is highly didactic and moralistic. It has empowered its readers to explore its existence, history, relations, values, and paves their way in future. It transcends boundaries of religion, geography, race and gender, challenges limitations and reader's constricted horizons, and enables children's to connect and open out to the world and to become restless, curious, and questioning. Children's literature books comprise fantasy, fairytales, magic, science fiction, history as indispensable constituents. Fantasy provides moral and spiritual guidance to children. J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series, steeped in fantasy, has created a sensation in the literary world. It represents a power position taken in the field of children's literature by encapsulating its genre and emerged as an educating and gratifying work to its readers. The Harry Potter series can be utilized to assist children in gaining values and moral inputs that will aid them in their personal development and to help them become useful contributors to their modern world. This study aims to illustrate the power and role of children's literature in its readers along with Harry Potter series.

Key Words: Literature, Children's literature, Power, Fantasy, Education

“Criticism and reviewing of any literary genre, including children's literature, contributes immensely to the improved development of the literature,” (Haviland, 391)

Literature has an extraordinary faculty to sensitise the human mind and heart and hypnotize readers in a way that is distinctly different from scientific study. The function, superiority, and influence of different genres of literatures have been a topic of discussion for a long time around the world. Different literatures, around the world have their significant characteristics and influence on their readers. Children's literature is one of those powerful literatures. Its audience is far reaching and its impact and influence in society are deep and significant and has been widely acclaimed. According to G. M. Knowles, “Literature written for children must constitute one of the largest and most important social domains in this country” (2).

Children's literature is not a new-sprung term. It has always existed. All literatures have

genesis in the ancient art of story-telling. Story telling is an integral part of every literature and culture. In ancient times, there wasn't any criterion to categorise literary text for an adult or for children. Before the advent of printing machine and the trend of literary material in written form, it existed in oral story telling. However, with the invention of printing machine, a written form of literature came in to existence called children's literature.

Children's literature is a significant genre of literature. The term children's literature seems a very naive term that is written only for children and tends towards some books for children. However, the term encompasses some social issues, moral values, entertaining and educating material. It is a complex term to apply to a body of text and form a body of literature which is broad and varied. It includes books, magazines, poetry, drama, fiction or non-fiction that is basically written for children. Nancy Anderson defines children's literature as, "all books written for children, excluding works such as comic books, joke books, cartoon books, and non-fiction works that are not intended to be read from front to back, such as dictionaries, encyclopaedias, and other references materials." (2) Children's literature is something different from adult or any other kind of literature. It is written with some specific motifs and class, like other literatures, for its concerned readers. In *Children's Literature, briefly*, Michael O. Tunnel and James S. Jacobs have defined children's book as, "one created by a knowledgeable and skilled author in which the elements of literature measure up under critical analysis. Quality is recognised by evaluating different elements of the books, including style and language, character, plot, illustrations, pacing setting, tensions, design and layout, mood, accuracy, tone, point of view, and theme" (13).

Children's literature is significant and influential in the same way as any other literature. We must not marginalize it as powerless since they are written only for children. Since it is written by experienced and knowledgeable adults, it can be depicted as a constant communication between inexperienced children and experienced adults. Peter Hunt looks at children's literature as "an important 'system' of its own, not as a lesser or peripheral part of 'high' culture." (7) The writers of children's books have interpreted them as powerful and as a means of dominating children. Nodelman suggests that adults "write books for children to provide them with values and with images of themselves *we* approve of or feel comfortable with." (30) Children's books are not only a pleasant way to experience the joy of reading and experiencing literature, but also a way to understand the world around them. These books are treasures of knowledge and have potential to stay with readers in dulcet as well as doleful moment of their life. Children's literature has power to mould and enhance the social and personnel ideas of its readers in a deeply personal way and enable them to cope up with outer world.

Children's literature may be considered as an entrance of social and educational domain. It is a spring-board for children to start their social as well as academic life journey. It can be considered as a socialization tool. Kimberley Reynolds has established a relationship between children's literature and society in *Introduction to Children's Literature Studies: A Research Handbook*. He has defined the role of children's literature to teach the prevailing values and it gives a better understanding about the elements of historical and cultural landscape. (1) Maria Dibella and Julie Hamiston have highlighted the importance and power of children's literature in their book *Undercover: Exploring Values Education using Children's Literature*. In their opinion, children's literature has power to enhance its readers' ability in different aspects and help them in becoming independent in life. According

to them, literature enables children to:

- identify and clarify their values;
- reflect upon their own experiences;
- compare situations in stories with their own experiences;
- become involved in new experiences via the literary medium;
- come to terms with sensitive issues, by identifying with and relating to characters in a story (2).

Children's literature starts its didactic role right from early childhood. It is pedagogically important for children. Peter Hollindale says, "all children's literature is inescapably didactic." (30) Childhood is a stage in a man's life that deliberately determines the path of further life in future. Okolie has stated, "In the beginning, there was childhood and childhood makes the man or woman." (Muleka, 13) Children's literature has the potential and power to develop a child with multi-dimensional mindset right from his childhood. Since childhood is a crucial stage in the development of a child, children's approach to books must be in the right way. The reader or audience of children's literature are all non-adult, means children or teenagers (young adult) who are under age and require attention of adults to protect, guide, and enlighten them. According to Tucker, "children have to learn conventions and some stories with clear conventions are helping children who are trying to build up some ways of predicting the immediate future...." (180) The acquisition of the teachings of children's literature would be part and parcel of the process of growing up. Children's books can provide children with "a very special kind of shared experience and the basic English words and phrases needed to talk about it." (Ernst and Richard, 323) These books empower its readers with vocabulary which in turn help them in understanding the language.

Reading books is children's important activity. One of the most important and positive aspects of reading and its main purpose is the informative function. Children's book editor, Janet Schulman has described the educational and emotional benefits of reading to children with her metaphor, "books help give children a leg up on the ladder of life." (vi) Children are more vulnerable to be influenced by literature than adults. We can say that there is a strong and lifelong impact of reading books on children. Reading children's book entails literary engagement with the cultural, social, and psychological complexities of life and may have positive influence on children's social skills, personality, and mental development. Not only reading and writing help children in their development but also listening to the stories helps them. "Listening to stories and telling them stories prepare the children to be effective writers and communicators" (Genishi, 405).

Children's literature includes short stories, short novels, poetry, drama, fairy tales, myths, and legends as didactic elements. Each of it has extreme importance in children's life. Children love and like to read adventure stories, fairytale stories, thriller stories, heroic stories, horror stories, and even family stories which aim to indoctrinate, entertain, amuse, instruct, and teach them moral lessons. Advocating the importance of stories in the life of a child, M. Carroll says, "It is easier to teach a child the difference between right and wrong through imaginative stories because they speak to young people more eloquently than a teacher with a list of rules." (26) Children also like some familiar and made-up oral stories about themselves that give them opportunity to enter into the world of wider range of

possibilities. It enhances their imagination and thinking power. While reading some books and stories children place themselves into their protagonist's (of his age) circumstances.

Fantasy is an overarching theme and plot of children's literature. It has long been associated with children's literature. It has always secured a high status within children's literature. Apparently, fantasy is considered suitable for children in the same manner as other elements (fairytales and folktales), and act as an impactful vehicle of socialization. Fantasy attracts children that provide them opportunity to imagine themselves in the adult limitations. There is a raft of children's books saturated with imagination, fantasy, fairytales, folk tales, and magic such as Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*, Elizabeth Newbery's *Tales from the Arabian Nights*, Charles Kingsley's *Water Babies*, George MacDonald's *Princess and the Goblin*, Charles Perrault's *Cinderella*, and so on.

Fantasy in children's literature has been employed as a dominant mode of writing to engage its readers in order to educate and inculcate values in them and educating children to handle real life problems by encouraging the use of creativity and imagination. Fantasy invokes and encourages imagination in children that lead to critical thinking. Lucia Owen claims that, “an imagination educated in part by reading fantasy [. . .] isn't hampered by words like 'impossible.’” (76) Fantasy in children's literature not only entertains them but also engages them in continuous reading the text to execute its pedagogical purposes and motives. Professor of English, Robert Crossley has stated that “the appeal to Fantasy may become a pedagogical trick which teachers can safely employ to engage students in a process which will not undermine rational modes of thought and discourse.” (288) Fantasy in children's literature relies upon ideas and facts about real contexts and places in order to develop new perspectives and grounds of power and imparts different geographies for childhood experiences. Children's fantasy literature has the ability and potential to function as enactments of desire, employing various imaginary dimensions of play to marginalize social and political boundaries.

J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series is an awe-inspiring creation of children's Literature. At the time of publication of the first book of the series, publishers categorised it as Children's literature for age nine and above, but as time passed, it has hypnotized people of all age groups and gained worldwide popularity and fame. On the great surge in the adult readers of *Harry Potter* series, Brenda Bowen, executive vice president and publisher of Simon & Schuster Children's publishing, says, “There's not a particle of me that's troubled by the idea that adults might be reading children's books. They jolly well should be. Thank you, J. K. Rowling, for making it cool to read children's books.” (Weinberg, 45) Over the years *Harry Potter* series has had a great influence on today's new generation. Philip Pullman, winner of the 2001 Whitbread Award for his mystery novel, *The Amber Spyglass*, has stated, “If anything good has come out of me getting the Whitbread and the attendant publicity, and *Harry Potter* being a mass seller all over the world, it is that it's drawing the attention of adults to the work of other children's writers, which it thoroughly deserves” (Weinberg, 45).

Since children's literature is designed and developed for children's entertainment and edification, *Harry Potter* series fits in both purposes. It comprises all important constituents required qualifying children's literature. In *Harry Potter* series, the same importance is given to education and learning as to entertainment, values, and tradition. In the series, Rowling has created a learning culture and atmosphere, apart from magic, that imparts a sense of responsibility to its students. It has been confirmed as an educational tool for children.

Andrew J. Frank and McBee Mathew T. have claimed that, “with guidance, students can apply the lessons learned by Harry and his friends to their lives” (37). It is a treasure of knowledge, learning and values enabling readers to cope up with outer world and its inhabitants. The *Harry Potter* series renders “them with a broad knowledge base from which they can make meaning of the world.” (Collings, 8) It contains various personal qualities such as love, friendship, honesty, courage, selflessness, sacrifice, respect, loyalty, truthfulness, mercy, hope, and so on.

In *Harry Potter* series, there is a fight between good (Harry Potter) and evil (Lord Voldemort). Each volume of the series contains a fight between good and evil (good overcomes evil at the end of every story), and in this conflict characters identify new facts about themselves and others. In the series distinction between good and bad people, good and bad action stressed which is one of the lessons that readers can take from the series. As the story moves ahead, circumstances of the characters' lives also change. Over and over again in the series it is made clear that it is a person's choices and actions that are the defining elements of his moral character. It is not our ancestry, social roles, or wealth that makes us who we are. The characters have to make choices according to the circumstances moulding their lives. Albus Dumbledore tells Harry in *Chamber of Secrets*, “our choices . . . that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities” (333). These choices assimilate the personal values of the characters. The choices that Harry and other characters make can be useful for children in their own moral reasoning (Kern, 121-127).

The *Harry Potter* series has influenced young readers and the publishers in scholarly ways. Millions of readers and lovers around the globe consider the series to be a great read. Rowling has designed the series in such a way that it has power to entertain and engage readers and greatly influence children's different perceptions. This series covers a broad area of knowledge. The series imparts an opportunity to students to “develop a genuine appreciation of diversity and an awareness and understanding of how people are constituted by the various discourses and social experiences to which they have access.” (Collings, 8) Through the character of Harry Potter and his experiences, Rowling has empowered students to overcome their difficulties, stiff odds, and challenges they face in their life. She has imparted some significant values, traits, and choices to Harry Potter and that may be helpful to children in the formulation of their own moral reasoning. (Kern, 121) Anne Klaus writes that while Harry Potter “corresponds perhaps most likely to the upright and virtuous fairy-tale hero [...] Rowling's side characters reveal nuanced moral profiles, Psychological depth and self determination” (32).

The *Harry Potter* series is full of values and teachings. It contains quite a few such elements and values that children can reflect in their personalities. Jennifer Sattaur writes that, “Harry, then, is a symbol for hope, and following his story allows the reader something else - an escape into a world where there is more hope than in our own. Both for children and adults, the *Harry Potter* novels offer vicarious relief.” (8) Harry Potter is the hero of the series and children have influence of him in their life. Margery Hourihan's says, “hero stories are a powerful agent in shaping social and political attitudes, and that their influence is always conservative” (21). This study has attempted to define children's literature in the term of its power and importance in children's life along with *Harry Potter* series.

For a better construction and formulation of a society, the understanding of values and emphasis on education is indispensable. Children are the future of a society as well as the

nation. Children's literature is a treasure of values and knowledge and capable to build up children's future. It can be depicted as a knowledge ware house with a propensity to leverage shared knowledge for multidimensional development of the children. It has been, since its genesis, a rich source of morality, values, and teachings. It is a very effective and powerful tool to make children self dependent and empowers them in their growth. It is a type of enjoyment along with didacticism, in which reader finds himself in a much comfortable situation, or we can say it is above all enjoyment. Children gain the essential moral values from different sources such as parents, children's literature, and schools. Children's books have complex and powerful relationship between the book and the reader and have been projected as carrying greater responsibility, and *Harry Potter* series has potential to fulfil all the required responsibilities.

In conclusion, James Runcie statement, at the very beginning of his documentary film, *J. K. Rowling: A Year in the Life*, commemorates, "Behind the witchcraft and the wizardry lies an intensely moral fable about good and evil, love and hatred, life and death."

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The Past and Its Influence over the Present: A Critique of the Novels of Amy Tan

Abstract:

*According to Giorgio Facchi, history is “a memory of the past for a better understanding of the present and a wiser provision of the future” (251). Usually, novels containing memory narratives prove to be great historical texts that provide the readers with information about the past and its influence over the present and this is very much evident from the Chinese-American novels which record the unpleasant past events that prompted the Chinese natives to migrate to other countries. These novels also portray the conflict that prevails between the first and the second-generation emigrants. This is mainly because of the lack of knowledge of the past among the second-generation, host-country-born natives. Amy Tan, a Chinese-American woman writer, deals in her novels with the issues that arise owing to the lack of knowledge of the characters' historical past. Her novels *The Joy Luck Club* (1989), *The Kitchen God's Wife* (1991), *The Hundred Secret Senses* (1995), and *The Bonesetter's Daughter* (2000) examine the influence of the past over the present in the lives of many a character. In these novels, history is presented as a part of the narration along with other factors such as myth, personal stories, and superstitious beliefs. Thus, she places history in equal footing with the other factors that also have influence over a person's present life. The deleterious condition of the Chinese politics from the beginning of the 20th century to the mid-20th century is presented as a part of the story narration. In these novels, history is presented closely linked with the lives of the ordinary Chinese people. The knowledge of the past that the second-generation daughters possess changes their revolting attitude towards their Chinese identity. And the history narrated by the Chinese mothers has the power to encourage the daughters and it helps overcome their confusion over their ethno-cultural identity. The contribution of history is so influential that it prompts the characters to go back to China in search of their ancestral history. The paper deals with the factors such as the past lives of the characters, the facts of what happened in the history, their native ethnic identity, and the space given to the migrants by the host country. And all these have the power to modify and redirect the lives of the emigrants so that their past shapes the present and the future.*

Power is a social force which has the capacity to influence the behaviour of others or to direct the course of events. There are many kinds of power such as socio-political, socio-economic, and military power operational in any society. History has the power to influence the events of the present and also the future. In the chapter “The Meaning of History,” Giorgio Facchi has pointed out three main attributes that can be associated with the term *history* and they are as follows:

- a) History is a sequence of events, in which is concealed an immanent link of interconnection;
- b) History is expression of the intentional design of a transcendent Power;

c) History is but a casual and meaningless succession of events, to which an order is given only by their concurrence or succession in the course of time. (249)

He also defines history as “a memory of the past for a better understanding of the present and a wiser provision of the future” (251).

The term *history* is relative because the history presented by one group of people might be different from another group. The presentation of facts is subjective. Consequently, history is a combination of what really happened and what is said to have happened in reality. The ethnicity, the culture, and the social position of the historian or the narrator have an influence over the history presented by him/her. Likewise, history by itself has the power to modify a person's or a group's ethnic identity, culture, and social position. According to Trouillot, “the role of the historian is to reveal the past, discover or, at least, approximate the truth” (5). And he also says, “History is a story about power, a story about those who won” (5). History is a retrieval of the past experiences of a community or an individual. The present situation of a community or an individual might even be the result of what actually happened in the past. In a speech titled “History as Literature” given at the American Historical Association, Theodore Roosevelt asserts that “a true historian will bring the past before our eyes as if it were the present” (Speech Dec 27 1912).

Usually, novels containing memory narratives prove to be great historical texts. They provide the readers with information about the past and its influence over the present. This is very much evident from the Chinese-American novels, which have recorded the unpleasant past events that prompted the Chinese natives to migrate to other countries. Roosevelt also describes the requirements needed for great historians as follows: “great historian must be able to paint for us the life of the plain people, the ordinary men and women, of the time of which he writes. He can do this only if he possesses the highest kind of imagination” (Roosevelt). And in the Chinese-American novels, thus, the presentation of history and the lives of the ordinary Chinese people go hand in hand.

Amy Tan, a Chinese-American woman writer, deals in her novels with the issues that arise owing to the lack of knowledge of the characters' historical past. Her novels *The Joy Luck Club* (1989), *The Kitchen God's Wife* (1991), *The Hundred Secret Senses* (1995), and *The Bonesetter's Daughter* (2000) examine the influence of the past over the present in the lives of many a character. In these novels, history is presented as part of the narration along with other factors such as myth, personal stories, and superstitious beliefs. Schueller in her article “Theorizing Ethnicity and Subjectivity: Maxine Hong Kingston's *Tripmaster Monkey* and Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*” says:

Tan uses a dialogic mixture of myth, fantasy, reverie, and historical facts without demarcating any as more true than the other and thus questions the true status of a national history. Within “true” stories of the Chinese past of the immigrant mothers, stories of arranged marriages and Japanese occupation, there are affective images of mythical women like the Moon Lady and the grotesque images of destructive mothers dismembering their daughters (22).

Thus, she places history in equal footing with the other factors that exert influence on a person's current life. The deleterious condition of the Chinese politics from the beginning of

the 20th century to the mid-20th century is presented as part of the story narration in her novels.

Amy Tan in her novels mainly delineates the migration of the Chinese during the Sino-Japanese War and the Chinese-Civil Wars. The history presented in the novels is subjective and is in the perspectives of the Chinese immigrant mothers. The past events and their personal stories are yoked together in their narration. In the novel, *The Joy Luck Club*, June Woo says, “Joy Luck was an idea my mother remembered from the days of her first marriage in Kweilin before the Japanese came” (9). This episode from the novel contains a few incidents of the Sino-Japanese war which find expression in the narration of the narrator's mother's life.

The memory narrations in the novels develop a strong tie between the past and the present lives of the Chinese migrants. The power of history is such that it has the ability to alter the relationships between the first-generation mothers and the second-generation daughters. In the article “Mothers' 'China Narrative': Recollection and Translation in Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* and *The Kitchen God's Wife*” Yuan quotes Marina Heung's remark: “Storytelling heals past experiences of loss and separation; it is also a medium for rewriting stories of oppression and victimization into parables of self-affirmation and individual empowerment” (2008). Thus, the memory narrations act as a healing agent for the mothers. The mothers are able to come to terms with their status as emigrants only through these memory narrations.

The past and the present are interdependent and Ben Xu expresses this interdependency of the past and the present in his article “Memory and Ethnic Self” as follows: “If the past casts a shadow on the present through memory, the present also preimposes on the past by the means of memory” (47).

History not only has the power to sculpt the present; it also has the ability to shape the future. The second-generation daughters' knowledge of the past changes their revolting attitude towards their Chinese identity. In the novel, *The Bonesetter's Daughter*, Ruth, the daughter of LuLing, after understanding her roots, realizes the importance of past, family, and tradition. She organizes a dinner party for the Chinese Thanksgiving Day. Before the end of the dinner, she thanks all her relatives who have come to the party making their reunion possible, she says:

As the years go on, I see how much family means. It reminds us of what's important. That connection to the past. The same jokes about being Young yet getting old. The traditions. The fact that we can't get rid of each other no matter how much we try. We're stuck through the ages, with the bonds cemented by sticky rice and tapioca pudding. Thank you all for being who you are. (100-101)

In the same novel, Ruth's understanding of her mother's past serves to be a revelation of her Chinese identity. She relates her identity even to a little thing like an old towel that she sees in her mother's house. This is explained in the following lines: “But as Ruth reached for the old towels, she found she could not get rid of them any more than her mother could. These were objects suffused with a life and a past. They had a history, a personality, a connection to other memories” (151).

Bella Adams refers to Spivak's words that appear in her article “Representing History in

Amy Tan's *The Kitchen God's Wife*: "fiction is also historical" and that "history is also fictive" (11). Thus, even the fictional narration of the characters' past in the novels of Amy Tan provides us with the information about the history that induced them to migrate. The fictionalized history represented in *The Kitchen God's Wife*, according to Bella Adams, enables "to disable misrepresentations of Chinese history in terms that safeguard a future for debate on history, literature, and historical literature" (11). History, even though fictionalized to an extent, has its own power to convey some truth about what actually happened. "History as representation is neither meaningless nor powerless in its impact on the world" (Adams 27).

The cultural barriers and the generational gaps contribute to the second-generation daughters' inability to truly understand and respond to their mothers' narration of their Chinese past. The daughters Jing-mei Woo, Rose Hsu Jordan, Waverly Jong, and Lena St. Clair in the novel, *The Joy Luck Club*, do not understand the efforts of their mothers to preserve the Chinese tradition. And they are not appreciative of their mothers' obsession with the native culture, until they come to know of their mothers' past. They consider their mothers' stories insignificant and ignore these stories of the past. Jing-mei Woo, Suyuan Woo's daughter says: "I never thought my mother's Kweilin Story was anything but a Chinese fairy tale" (15). The American-bred Chinese daughters are ashamed of their native culture. Jing-mei Woo, Suyuan's daughter, in the novel says that "In those days, before my mother told me her Kweilin story, I imagined Joy Luck was a shameful Chinese custom..." (19). It is only after they come to know about their past, the second-generation Chinese-American daughters understand the value of their native tradition. The history narrated by the Chinese mothers has the power to encourage the daughters to overcome their confusion of their ethno-cultural identity. These narrations of the past have the ability to reconnect the severed ties between the mothers and the daughters.

The knowledge of the past in the second-generation characters replaces their desire to adopt the American identity with the realization of their Chinese identity. The American-born daughters suffer from the superficial status of their identity that is, their dual identity – as an American and as a Chinese – leaves them confused. Only when they come to know of their roots, there is a reconciliation between their two opposing identities. The mothers recognize storytelling as the only way to convey their native culture and tradition and by using it they provide their daughters a link to Chinese culture.

The contribution of history is so significant that it prompts the characters to go back to China in search of their complete ancestral history. In the novel, *The Joy Luck Club*, June Woo travels to China in search of her mother's past, whereas in the novel, *The Kitchen God's Wife*, Winnie and Helen go to China in search of their lost ethnic identity. Likewise, in *The Hundred Secret Senses*, Olivia and Kwan go back to China so that Olivia can come to a real understanding of her identity as a Chinese woman.

The influence of the past is so dominating that the first-generation Chinese mothers are not able to accept their migrant identity. They despise the culture of the host country. When the American-born Chinese daughters are attracted to the American culture and tradition, the mothers find it impossible to accept and assimilate with the host country's way of life. The influence of the past also makes it impossible for the first-generation emigrants to forgo their Chinese ethnicity and accept their American identity. The past memories that are helpful for the daughters to assert their identity remain a stumbling block for the mothers in the

assimilation process.

The first-generation Chinese migrant mothers live entirely in the memory of their homeland. The mothers attempt their best to make their daughters understand the value of their identity, but fail miserably. It is only when they take the past as their weapon they succeed. In the novel, *The Joy Luck Club*, the mother, Ying Ying St. Clair, voices her concern as follows: "All her life, I have watched her as though from another shore. And now I must tell her everything about my past. It is the only way to penetrate her skin and pull her to where she can be saved" (274). Thus, the significance of memory narration is emphasized through the above quote and Ben Xu in his article "Memory and the Ethnic Self: Reading Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*" says, "Memory is not just a narrative, even though it does have to take a narrative form; it is more importantly an experiential relation between the past and the present, projecting a future as well" (2002). Hence, the past lives of the characters, the facts of the history, their native ethnic identity, and the space given to the migrants by the host country have the power to modify and redirect the lives of the emigrants so that their past shapes the present.

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Power Practices on Nature: An Ecocritical Perspective

Abstract

The present paper endeavours to provide a ecocritical delineation of how power operates on nature in a socio-political matrix. Power is inherent both in human individuals and groups. The embryonic form of individualistic power is manifest in one's sense of agency which prompts on to change and control oneself and the environment. In family and other structures of group, power takes different and various forms in accordance with the modalities of dynamism prevalent there. The focus of the paper is on the power conceived as a socio-political construct which is indeed ideological in content. It is essentially central to formulating a perspective of society. Power has been synonymously linked with the concepts of authority and hegemony that are evident in areas such as social, political, economic, cultural, gender and so on. The concept of power also presupposes the dialectical opposites such as the strong and the weak, the oppressor and the oppressed, the exploiter and the exploited, and the haves and the have nots. Power uses two sorts of resource to sustain and thrive-human resources and natural resources. The mode of utilization of these resources is determined by the sheer purpose the power intends to serve.

The paper examines duality of protection and destruction in the power practices on nature in general from an ecocritical perspective. Ecocriticism, a newly developed part and function of literary theory worldwide, conceptualizes the contours of symbiosis between man and nature and delineates why and how that symbiosis is being destroyed at times by acts of man. Man is the creator of culture. But if that culture is antagonistic to nature, it ultimately results in abysmal miseries. For, nature posses the deciding power. The fundamental premise of ecocriticism is that human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it. Historically, the notion of nature has remained a socio-cultural construct serving to legitimize the ideological claims of specific social groups.

Instead of a coercionist or anarchist approach, a pro-nature humanistic practice of power is highlighted. The essentiality of acknowledging the primacy of nature in the very human existence is emphasised. A bio-psycho-social approach to human well-being is considered in relation to deterioration of nature. A healthy body and wholesome surroundings are essential for the physical well-being. Meaningful happiness and contentment form the nucleus of psychological well-being. The idea of social well-being is also mentioned. The misuse of power on nature is against the basic right to live.

Human race has begun to wake into a disillusionment that the cornucopia of development has never set it free from plights. But, instead it has been put in a pillory of historical retribution. Perhaps it is destined to receive a punishment on the basis of nemesis for ecocide perpetrated out of avarice. Nature in general and the Earth in particular have been devastated by human atrocities. The planet is thus progressively becoming uninhabitable due to umpteen interventions initiated in the name of human development and furtherance of human supremacy. Historically, human explorations of nature ended up in its utter exploitation. Nature versus Man was an established antagonistic dual concept in

environmental paradigm. Science and technology were positioned against nature as the means to conquer it. Too much emphasis of the conqueror image of man and the vanquished image of nature presupposed a false notion that nature was passive. It was depicted as merely a resource to be consumed as and when man willed and aspired. That human kind is just one subgenus of the super genus called nature was undermined. No genuine attention was paid to the paradox of fraction swallowing the whole. The devotional attitude towards nature had turned into an attitude of a butcher. Such was the background from which ecocriticism was to emerge. The conceptual change apropos nature also facilitated it.

Nature Versus Culture: A Paradigm Shift

Nature refers to all the abiotic, biotic things and the space existing around us. To define mankind's position in relationship with nature has ever been a philosophical question. Relying on the perception and perspective of nature-man relationship, there arose three main views: theocentric, anthropocentric and ecocentric. Theocentric view of nature presupposes God at the centre of everything. It posits that God's will is the ultimate deciding factor. Nature is the manifestation of divine spirit. This view gradually paved way for anthropocentrism which holds that humanity is at the centre of everything. Corollary to this view, other forms of life are considered only as resources to be consumed by human beings. The human reason is the deciding factor. Rationalism proposed by Rene Descartes proclaimed the superiority of man by virtue of doubt and rationality. Protagoras declared "Man is the measure of all." But wisdom led mankind to a more logical and truthful view of the world: ecocentrism. It pertains to a monist concept of nature (Robert Kerridge). It refutes the possibility of a dichotomy between nature and man. Nature-culture dualism is negated by it. Spinoza who spoke for love, knowledge and interrelation conceived of man being in the web of living and non-living things that harmoniously play the universe. The Indian view of 'VasudhaivaKudumbakam' is a validation of eco-centrism.

The well-known Malayalam novelist Anand supports the bio-centric egalitarian ecology and how it is different from human-centric ecology (CharithraPadangal, 1998). Bio-centrism, a synonym of eco-centrism, according to Anand, is non-hierarchical in structure. But, the human centric or anthropocentric view is based on power and hierarchy. He says two types of relationships: vertical and horizontal. Human centricism involves vertical relationships which possesses an inherent hierarchical structure. It comprises man-made organizations, political power, gods and religious institutions. On the contrary, the eco-centric stance requires horizontal relationships. The position of man is thus viewed as a strand in the web of life, co-existing with the soil, air, rivers, trees, animals, in short, all the non-human elements in the world. The changed nature concept upholds the perspective that human culture is an integral part and extension of nature.

Emergence of Eco-criticism: A Historical Alternative

The term 'ecocriticism' was first coined by William Rueckert in his essay 'Literature and Ecology' in 1978. But it somehow underwent hibernation for a decade until it became active in the Western Literature Association Meeting held in 1989. It thus became an accepted branch of aesthetics as 'the study of nature writing'. It came to full bloom only when the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) came into being in 1993.

Consequently, two seminal works were published: *The Ecocriticism Reader*, edited by Cheryll Gloyfelty and Harold Fromm and *The Environmental Imagination* by Lawrence Buell.

Ecocriticism is now considered as the study of the relationship between literature and the environment. It also involves an exploration of human attitudes towards the environment as expressed in nature writing. It is synonymous with green cultural studies, ecopoetics and environmental literary criticism (Kumari Shikha, *Ecocriticism in Indian Fiction*, 2011). Eco-criticism is defined as the aesthetics of counter consciousness (K.C. Narayanan, 2010). It is the result of an intellectual quarrel with the coercionist and romantic approaches to nature. Moreover, its political and ideological dimensions are to be seriously taken into consideration (V. C. Harris, 2010).

The perspective of Ecocriticism is based on a nature-centred approach which is opposite to both theocentric and anthropocentric views on world. The theocentric theory of nature presupposes God or the Supreme Power at the centre of everything where as anthropocentric approach places man as the central figure of anything. As Protagoras proclaimed 'Man is the measure of all'. Everything is for man and everything is adjudged on the basis of whether it is beneficial or not for him. But, on the contrary to these, nature centric view conceptualises the oneness of nature and culture. It refutes the dichotomy between the material and the cultural.

The problems of environment are definitely a life and death problem for mankind. So, it began to be expressed in art and literature. Being the mirror of social and individual lives of human kind, literature cannot but stand aloof by disregarding these problems. Thus, aesthetics in modern times tries to evaluate literature and enriches its theoretical stalk house by means of critically applying a new way of approach to environment. This has resulted in a concept called ecological criticism or eco-criticism. Eco-criticism refers to the aesthetic endeavour to delineate how nature is reflected in literature. For instance, T S Eliot's *Waste Land* (1922) is full of images of the miserable images of the Thames and London city. The poet presents a river whose banks are filled with litter and slimy rats. He finds 'empty bottles, sandwich papers, silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, and cigarette ends'. In order to give the readers an opportunity to contrast, he quotes Edmund Spenser's line written in eulogy of the river: Sweet Thames run softly till I end my song. (Spenser: *Prothalamion*, 1596) This shows how literature depicts human environment which is part of nature. The 16th century Thames in Spenser's poetry is really a far cry from the 20th century Thames in Eliot's poetry. Such is the deterioration that the River Thames had undergone. Not only the Thames, the whole city of London is presented in the poem as overly polluted both physically and spiritually. The poet says about the 'brown fog' that covers the city in physical and spiritual dirt.' It is here that the aesthetic and philosophic representation of a reality is made in literature. The poet thinks that the physical deterioration is the manifestation of the spiritual degradation. The view that environmental pollution and moral pollution are two sides of the coin is a truism with regard to the morbidity of a sinking civilization.

Rachel Carson's "*Silent Spring*" is a great work which became a real whistle blower in the field of struggles for a better environment. The work is a legacy bequeathed to the environmental movement and therefore to eco-criticism. It opened the flood gates of a great disillusionment over our so called modern scientific development.

Eco-criticism is predominantly concerned with issues related to nature-man relationship and the resultant impacts. Therefore, the following questions are relevant. In what ways do

highly evolved and self-aware beings relate to nature? What roles do language, literature and art play in this relation? How have modernization and globalization processes transformed it? Is it possible to return to more ecologically attuned ways of inhabiting nature, and what would be the cultural prerequisites for such a change (Ursula K. Heise, 2006)?

Power: Conceptual Contours

Power is a socio-political construct which connotatively posits some ideological meanings. It is conceived as an extension of the agency in every human individual which enables them to change themselves and their environment. Human beings are conceived as homo sapiens and they do not merely subsume nature. While being part of nature, they put different and various sorts of interventions with a view to controlling natural phenomena in favour of their advantages and making use of diverse natural resources. The history of man can be seen as the history of discoveries and inventions that helped man to explore and exploit nature deeply and vastly. The human intervention on nature is possible because of power. Power as sense of agency in individuals and groups was the primary form. Later, power assumed ideological dimensions as it bloomed in the socio-political matrix when society developed and emerged from its primitive and simple rungs of development.

The concept of power in the backdrop of environment or nature is mainly socio-political in nature. It has many dimensions: political, social, economic and so on. The ancient Greeks political scholars thought of two types of power. One is nomosis and the other is hubris. The former refers to legitimate and desirable power while the latter to illegitimate, arrogant way of power practice. Modern thinking about social and political power begins in the writings of Niccollo Machiavelli (*The Prince*, early 16th cent.) and Thomas Hobbes (*Leviathan*, mid-17th cent.).

Power in the individual is manifest in his/her volition or will. Humans are endowed with the sense of agency which refers to the volition or will they have to change themselves and the world around. This is the most basic form of power. But when it comes to groups and group interests, ideology comes to play. The ultimate purpose of the interest is to get pleasure and happiness. In a class-divided society, power is applied with purpose of serving the interest of the dominant class. Same is the case with a society with gender inequality; the ideological underpinnings of power practice are to safeguard the inequality as such. The power of the dominant section is to ensure its own interests at the expense of the oppressed section. The power is here hegemonic in content. The fact is that the application of power has mainly two fields of practice: human resources and natural resources. In the capitalist mode of production, the competition for higher profit is an aim for many companies as it normally encourages market economy. So, the cut throat competition compels entrepreneurs to explore and exploit both human and natural resources inordinately and excessively. This process continues whether it is in the colonial or neo-colonial fabric of capitalism. Power on nature has to be understood in its myriad forms of application. It can be said that some objective laws govern and determine the mode of power intervention on nature.

Power Versus Nature: Problems and Contradictions

The depletion of natural resources like underground water and fossil fuels owing to over exploitation, the deforestation and desertification of lands , the complete pollution of air,

water and soil, global warming due to drastic climate change are the main charges in the indictment against mankind as a whole. Homo sapiens are fated to court holocausts leading racial extinction unless it regains its wisdom to live in symbiosis with nature. But the saddest thing is that it is like a suicidal pact as human black creativity has victimised almost all other species on the earth. The fear of the total ruin is evident in the artistic expressions like literature, paintings, sculptures, films and other forms of aesthetic creativity. The writers and the artists are psychologically equipped with the pessimistic premonitions of an oncoming disaster. They have been lamenting over the ill-fate of the earth since the time of industrial revolution in the 19th century. This perennial issue of human atrocities and excesses on nature has paved the way for a new branch of aesthetics called 'eco-criticism'.

The problems of ecological or environmental have become a focal point of our concerns for many decades. It does not mean that literature reflects the ecological pessimism alone. There are a great deal of instances of humans as individuals and groups, individual nations and international associations intervening in nature for its maintenance and betterment. These ventures are with environmental optimism. The attempts in this respect started in 1970s at the international level. The earth summit in 1992 in Brazil was a confirmation of this cosmopolitan anguish over nature and human existence. Incidentally, the COP15 in Paris with its slogan 'Now or Never' is also looked upon with great hope and expectations.

Indiscriminate application of power on nature to tap natural resources and energy has resulted in unforeseen human miseries in the form of natural disasters, global warming, pollution, deforestation, desertification, and diseases. Most often, the negative consequences of great human historical feats are overlooked. Industrial revolution in Europe, for example, brought forth many advantages and it was eulogised for them. But at the same time, the ruin it exerted on nature is often left untouched. Same is the case with many national developmental achievements in various countries. They raised food production, industrial output, number of roads, and so on. But in fact these feats were at the expense of ecological break downs. Production, profit, innovative facilities, mechanization and more comfort have been the motives behind developmental efforts. Nature was never there among the priorities set by nations, organizations and individuals. Culture and development were considered unrelated to nature.

However, the weak voices raised against nature exploitation began to be heard in literature and environmentalist movement. Such protests are seen from Chief Seattle to many in modern times. They were raised when the habitats of the native people were subjected to submersion by the profit seekers. The speech by the Chief Seattle is a proclamation against the machinations of the political power of the state which had intentions to subject the natural wealth of Seattle, a tribal island. It was a confrontation with coercionist power on nature. The bleeding words of that speech were writing the manifesto of the world environmental movement and eco-criticism. Literature hereafter became richer and richer with aesthetic and journalistic representations of such protests. It recorded the escalating graph of pro-nature consciousness among people who showed their readiness to die for nature. They knowingly or unknowingly were declaring a paradigmatic shift: culture is not something unconnected with nature. It is indeed the part and extension of nature. If culture, as a make of human living and thinking, is against nature in the ultimate analysis, nature will anyway try to dislodge it. This removal may take the form of a revengeful retaliation. The changed concept of the nature-culture relationship an effective conceptual tool for furthering the

interests of various sections of people whose life is closely connected to forests and other natural habitats. The protest for saving nature is in effect the protest for saving human life. Not only the tribals and aboriginals, but the rural and even the urban people were paraded behind the banner of nature protection in different countries. Moreover, the politics of nature movement was in no time identified by people world over. The green movement with political ideologies appeared in various parts of the world.

Power Reconstructing Nature

In addition to protesting against the atrocities on nature initiated by economic power groups, individuals and social groups and governments have come forward to conserve and replenish nature. Their efforts are so crucial that the future of nature depends on them. Wangari Maathai of Kenya is a sterling model for individuals who dedicated themselves to the cause of nature service. It is hoped that a concerted and multi-pronged action can effect positive changes in this regard. Literature has shown some marvellous works that inspired people to serve nature. One of them is a French short story written by Jean Giono titled as 'The Man who Planted Trees'. It tells how the constructive power of an individual transformed a barren land into a fertile forest land. It underscores the inevitability of a symbiotic harmony between human culture and nature.

Power for Nature: Global Vision and Local Action

The experiences of the world environmentalist movement indicate the prospect for a pro-nature power practice all over the world. It necessitates empowering native local groups to safeguard rivers, seas, forests and the rest. For this purpose, political and state power should be delegated to the respective sections of people and to give guidelines to work effectively. Without the empowerment of the grass root levels and their mobilization, the nature conservation and maintenance will not take place.

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Impact of Social Media in Discourse of Power: An Analysis

Abstract

The innovations in the field of information technology have opened up new ways for connecting people across the globe by surpassing the limitations of time and space. Out of innumerable new communication technologies that were developed, social media created new platform for human expression and gathered a wide appeal among the people. In a busy modern world, the demand for short, bite-sized information is high and this demand is met by the social media and is one of the main reason for its rapid popularity across world. For eg. If a public figure makes a long speech in public sphere, within hours we can get a capsule sized form of speech in the form of updates in the social network, with the views of the netizens.

The term 'social media' is often used, loosely, to describe a wide range of new Web 2.0 platforms. There exist different forms of social media such as social networking sites (such as Facebook) and content based communities (eg. You Tube) and micro blogging sites (eg. Twitter) so on, which encouraged people to pour out their emotions and ideas into cyberspace. It is also used to propagate ideologies of different social and political structures and is a powerful tool to open up dialogue with the people and a platform for discussing social issues.

In the recent years, social media played a key role in mobilizing the people for a social cause or movement and became an effective means to fuel social and political movements (eg. Arab spring, Occupy Wall Street, 2012 Delhi gang rape). We can also see a growing trend among political parties to use social media as a way to gain public attention and as a way to attain or maintain power. The Indian General Election of 2014 and Aam Aadmi Party political campaigns are proof of how it was utilized effectively to create a good virtual public image.

This paper tries to investigate the influence of social media in minds of the people and how the ideologies of different power structures are propagated through social media in order to harness the power of people to maintain their power in the social matrix.

For almost two decades, the web has changed how we perceive the world around us and how data is stored, analyzed, published, searched and consumed. There used to be a time when we had to wait for weeks to get a piece of information from any distant land. But by the advent of computer age, to communicate with a person far away became a simple task that can be done within a second. The World Wide Web, which is "a system of internet servers that support specially formatted documents", allows computer users to gather or share data with anyone in the world with few clicks of the mouse through internet (Beal 1). Even though the initial phase in evolution of internet allowed only limited interaction between site and users, the coming of web 2.0 enabled a more enhanced two way kind of communication between user and sites. Web publishers are creating platforms, instead of content, and it's on these platforms which the users are creating their content on (Alejandro 5). It is upon the

foundations of Web 2.0 that the networking structures of social networking sites were erected.

Social network sites are web-based systems that allowed for mass interaction, conversation and sharing among members of a network (Murphy 3). Kaplan and Michael Haenlein define social media as "a group of internet based applications that are built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content" (61). Social media and Web 2.0 have altered the entire digital media landscape by putting the power of influence in the hands of common people who want to share their feelings, opinions and experiences and this helps the new media to play the role of an extension of traditional word-of-mouth communication (Stareva 13).

According to Kiran Bala, in India the number of people actively using social media is about 66 million but it is growing fast with the availability of cheaper broadband connection and internet enabled handsets at very low price (2). There are more and more people registering on social media sites and uploading pictures, posting and commenting their opinion on different topics. In early stage of internet, social media sites were used to connect with friends and old school buddies and people from different parts of world on a communication basis. But now it is becoming a platform to voice the concerns of the people and to protest against different socio-political issues and government policies that adversely affect life of people. In the digital world there are no social boundaries that delineate or suppress the voice of the common man and of the marginalized. All computer users are treated equally and there are no separate rules or norms for operating a computer for a Brahmin or Dalit. Computer won't ask whether you are a Dalit or Brahmin when you try to log in to a site and won't give caste-based results for a Google search you made. Anyone who have access and knows how to operate a computer can create or share data as they like. It is this equality that gives it tremendous appeal among the masses and makes it a perfect tool to voice the people's concern. There are many Facebook pages that support many social causes and many pages that analyse and criticize the injustices prevalent in the society (E.g. The Logical Indian)

In order to understand the working principle of social media platform, an insight into difference between Web 1.0 and 2.0 is necessary:

Web 2.0 allows for openness, organization and community. Web publishers are creating platforms instead of content. Users are creating the content. Wikipedia, MySpace, Facebook and Youtube most illustrate the power of Web 2.0 especially for ordinary web users. An approach of creating and distributing Web content that is characterized by open communication, decentralization of authority, freedom to share and re-use In comparison with the Web 1.0 model, a Web publisher (whether a news site or a personal site) would upload content to a Web site for many others to read and the communication transaction would end there. The 2.0 model not only allows those "many others" to comment and add to the content posted by the publisher, but the audience can also add original content themselves (Alejandro 5).

When a user log-in to vast decentralized world of social media which enables him to generate and share his thought and of others, a whole new level of possibilities opens up before him. In the printing press era, it took lot of time and labour to publish any type of

printed material. Now it can be done with few clicks of a button by integrating facts and fiction from your thought with colourful images from any digital source. There is no need for a printing press or rely on any institution for projecting or sharing your thoughts to the world. There is no kind of pressures or influences of publishers when you publish a story or article in the web space.

In old days, when world wasn't technologically connected, reporters was given a lead or went out to find a story on their own. Today many stories are shared online through some web based third parties or through social media sites so that by the time the story reaches the people through traditional media like newspaper, the story in, one form or the other, is already out in the cyber space. According to Alejandro, " lots of tips or leads these days are from the web or what's "trending" in social networks like Twitter, Facebook or its popularity rating on Digg or based on search volume patterns in search engines like Google or Bing" (9). This is radically defining what breaking news means in the new internet era. Journalists are forced to provide real time information of a story as people prefer real time news. Many major news agencies now have an online web page and different social media pages of their own to connect to people by giving news feeds and getting feedback from users in form of comments or likes. In addition to that there are online news agencies which pose as a great challenge to offline media world.

Ever since social media began to utilise the scope of news reporting, it has really changed the way we perceive the news streaming through online media. The people are not just passive listeners of news anymore but are becoming part of news itself. Now a days there are many news reports that utilise the social media responses of people towards an issue in their reports. When Delhi Gang Rape case of 2012 occurred ,where a girl on a moving bus was brutally raped and thrown out of bus surfaced on social media, we saw massive outrage of netizens against the rapists through their comments and tweets. Many online media provided snapshots of comments that people posted on Facebook or Twitter pages to show netizen's opinion about the rape thereby making the voice of people part of news. They not only becomes passively involved in 'following' news articles online but also actively becomes part of discussions through their 'comments'. When you browse through any Facebook pages of any news channels you can see people's reaction to any particular news article in the comment section which shows that news is no more something that is passively passed on to the public ears.

As social media became cyber ground for mass interaction many organisations, political parties and government began to explore the scope of using it to propagate their ideologies through it. According to Pratyasha Jain, in 2011, Anna Hazare who pledged to fight against corruption and wrong practices in the government got massive support from the people and a page called 'Join Anna Hazare's Fast to Bring the Jan Lokpal Bill' , created by a Mohammed Zaid Shaikh, a Mumbai-based Facebook user, got follow/likes more than 50,000 which showed the massive support of the public in favor of the social movement and this digital number gave strength and hit factor to the movement (85). Another instance is Aam Admi Party, realizing the new social media trend, was able to harness the power of youth through connecting via social networking sites. Aam Admi was able to get support of more than 50,000 followers in Twitter and more than 1 million followers in Facebook (Harihar 1). Aam Admi propagated their ideologies and plan of actions through social media and attracted the young cyber crowd. It is through the online and offline campaigning that attracted lots of people and made them connect with the people in real time and as a result was able to come to

power in 2015 Delhi Legislative Assembly election. BJP government also came to power in 2014 with a technology-powered election campaigns which included promotion of the Brand Modi and highlighting the Gujarat model of development. According to Michael Kugelman, "the social media effect was huge for BJP. . . . They really understood that social media is an extended version of the campaign trail" (Ali 1).

Social media has clearly become a game changing element in the technology driven world. But even when we believe we are free to post/share/comment whatever we like in social media sphere "individuals are very much locked into the design of [social Media] outlets and limited to its range of choices and predefined format" (Bonnano 2). For renowned philosopher and social theorist Michel Foucault, power is an "everyday, socialized and embodied phenomenon" and it exists everywhere (2). "Through his notion of power/knowledge, Foucault focuses on the institutional processes at work in a society, that allow for fact or truth to be established" (2). Foucault believed that for something to be considered as a fact "it must be subjected to a thorough process of ratification by those in positions of authority" (Mills 72). When we analyse the digital structure of the social media through Foucauldian lens we can see that "there are indeed power-relations operating amidst the division between those who own and those who utilize social media outlets" (Bonnano 2). In Foucault's perspective "where there are imbalances of power relations between groups of people or between institutions/states, there will be production of knowledge" (Mills 69).

Social media owners have the power of structuring and designing the outlet the way they choose and it ultimately constrains its users to specific options and a predefined format they must work with (Bonnano 2). Social media also has panoptic vision over our activities and even when we believe we control privacy and content of our Facebook account, all the digital traces are recorded in the servers of Facebook and they have the authority to take down or temporarily disable any account if they notice we violated the terms and policies of Facebook. These traits clearly shows the sovereign nature of the Facebook over the users and questions the idea of users as a free agents when constructing their own identities in cyber media space. The hegemonic nature of social media is one whereby its users seem to abide by the rules imposed by the owners and it is only by obeying the standardized format it put forwards that we are able to create a profile and this ultimately benefits the owner and serves to reinforce and verify their position of power (Bonnano 5).

Foucault viewed power as "the most amorphous axis, as it includes political structures, systems of rules and norms, techniques and apparatuses of government, dividing practices, and strategic relations between subjects who act upon each other" and believed that power relations are conditions of possibility for subjectivities but he didn't mean to give the impression that we are trapped by modern forms of government, though critics accuse him of portraying a world without hope (Simons 191). One of his innovation in his perception of power was that to reject the view that it was merely repressive and to perceive power as productive also. "Power produces; it produces reality, it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth" (191). Foucault hold the view that "Power in its positive sense is enabling, constituting subjects, even though the forms of subjectivity constituted may not be desirable" (191). He also hold the view that "where there is power, there is resistance" (195). Rather than with the academic status of his works, Foucault was concerned with the changes his knowledge wrought in himself and in others. It is in part through writing as an art of the self that Foucault was able produce himself as an individual and resist the modes of subjectification (186).

Social media gained prominence by empowering users with a platform to express their ideas and perceptions of the world and or to resist the universal ideas imposed by the socio-political power structures. The first effective use of social media was visible in the Arab Spring which was a democratic uprising that arose independently and spread across Arab world in 201. According to Vera Bardici, social media are rapidly evolving and their significance is increasing while their role is becoming instrumental in bringing social change. In the recent Egyptian revolution, that dethroned president Hosni Mubarak, social media such as Facebook, Twitter and Youtube have been transformed into effective means to fuel revolt and bring about political transformation (4). This shows the vital role played by social media for "becoming an enduring resource for the successful mobilization of bottom-up, grassroots movements and leaderless collective actions" (4). In Delhi gang rape case, which occurred on 16 December 2012, a 23 year old girl was brutally raped by a group of criminal minded people in a moving bus and the reaction to this heinous crime was felt all around the world. Social media expressed contempt and anger over the incident and public protested against the government for not providing adequate security for women and clashed with security forces. Public protests took place in New Delhi on 21 December 2012 at India Gate and in front of Parliament and President House of India and similar protest occurred throughout the country (2). Thousands of people signed online petitions protesting the incident. Within 10 days of the incident, many Facebook groups named 'Gang raped in Delhi' created on December 20, 2012', 'Delhi for women's Safety', 'Delhi Gang rape- Protest' became platform to protest against sexual assault cases and gave voice to raise concern about women's safety in India (Kumar 4). "The entire protest was self-motivated and organized through social media platform like Facebook and Twitter" (1). The political class of India was thoroughly shocked by the speed and efficiency with which the people mobilized for the protest and this incident showed how the people used the social media to facilitate their outrage against injustice and how they were able to mobilize a huge crowd for fighting against a social cause, against those who were in power. The Minister of State for Human Resource Development Shashi Tharoor statement that "the social media space is a parallel universe to the main stream media and the stories on these platforms have a resonance of their own" (4) is a proof of the powerful influence of social media in current socio-political scenario.

Social media made it possible for us to connect with each other bypassing social barriers made by religion, caste, gender, race etc and geographical barriers. We can communicate with each other on a single cyber space transgressing many boundaries marked by our society or sovereign authority for a socio-political cause or causes. Even within the panoptic vision of Facebook and government, we can utilize social media as a common ground for our struggle against different power structures for our rights and for a better future. We can resist the current modes of subjectification with our own writings in social media and through sharing it and thus marking a change in ourself and in others. As social media is still in its infant stage and there are still many scopes yet to be explored, we can't say by posting or commenting in social media will bring a major social revolution or a massive change in the power structures of the world now but it can definitely be seen as platform or site of resistance against established social order or to launch major social movements that may bring massive change in the socio-political power structures of world in future.

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Traditional Myths in the Construction of a New 'Kerala Space': Cyber Imagining of Kerala and the Play of Power

Abstract

Contextualized manufacturing of meaning is of greater concern to Cultural Studies. The disturbing yet inevitable entry of the structures of power furthers the cultural intricacies of this meaning making system. The unacknowledged legitimacy of power structures is also there in the cyber imagining of communities. Amidst an array of tools of power perpetuation, myths and legends can be considered to play a significant role in this cyber imagining process. To understand the various nuances of power play through myths and legends, this paper endeavours to focus on how certain codes of meanings are established and created in the cyber construction of Kerala community. It also scrutinizes the why and how of such a meaning production. It also checks why a certain stereotyped image of Kerala gets popularized in the cyber realm and why some fall in to oblivion. The manufacturing and manipulation of a new myth of Kerala in the virtual space is also analysed as a part of my proposed paper.

Mythology is ubiquitous in the sense that it postulates a rich cultural heritage to every community. It imaginarily generates a set of artifacts that can even stereotypically delineate the futurist perception of a current community's status quo and can also extent its influence into the other forms of representations in which the re construction of a community take place (like media and cyber space). Scepters of previous media continue to influence even the cyber realm. Language and visual gimmicks conspire in the cyber transfiguration of actual geographic communities. Myths bestow added nuance to this cyber construction of virtual communities since they can also be deemed as specific structure of language. When the concerns of power enter this cyberspace through legends and myths, a new meaning is evolved for this so-called modern technologically-augmented virtual space and it may outstrip the socio cultural intricacies of both the offline and online spaces of a community's existence.

Hence a combined cultural analysis of myth and the play of power in the context of cyber Kerala construction is proposed in my paper.

Cyberspace cannot be simply defined and perceived as a technological advancement that has transformed the conventional non-modern temporally-fixed nature of interactive and mass communication. It is a cultural terrain where multifaceted socio-politico-ideological functions that can effectuate a technified conception of modern society are performed. The activities that are being performed on the cyberspace cannot be seen as merely representational. Though internet technically replicates many of the offline practices within its seemingly unlimited space, the actual process is that of a constructive representation that even reaches the brink of imagining.

It is true that within the ambit of cyberspace the already-invented entities of offline arena get entered, but this entry is not something purely unhindered; numerous ideological factors

and techniques of power perpetuation are making continuous influences in this flow of artefacts from offline to the online space, hence making the term “representation” insufficient.

There are countless pages on regional-landscape-based communities in the cyber realm. The cyber content that “conventionally represents” these regions, takes its cue from its offline counterparts. This paper attempts to unfold the imaginings behind these representations and subsequently unravel the power relations behind its online conception with particular focus on the idea of myths and their cultural significance.

I have taken Kerala as the case in point to analyse the nature of imagining local regions within cyberspace. Like most of the cyber communities, Kerala is also virtually generated by relying on the conventional non-modern elements. There are different websites that imagine Kerala in their own unique ways, and the strategies and means adopted by them to generate an online Kerala by these websites have undergone a scrutiny here to underscore the nature of online Kerala imagining, particularly focusing on the power relations associated with a selected myth of Kerala, that of Lord Parasurama. For the purpose I have analysed a few websites on Kerala, that almost replicate the offline notions and assumptions on Kerala. The thrust area of concern is that of the myth of Parasurama and the related sobriquet of Kerala—“God's own country.”

“Myths are stories that animate individuals and societies by providing paths to transcendence that lift people out of the banality of everyday life. They offer an entrance to another reality, a reality once characterized the promise of the sublime” (Mosco 3). Myths can also be considered as means of communication, to put it simply, as messages. They play diverse functions—peripherally they are easy-to-digest stories that can appeal to anyone; in a deeper sense, they are tools of power perpetuation that in a way or other circulate a sanctified conception of social relations. The myth of Parasurama, who has thrown his axe from Gokaranam resulting in the retrieval of the once-submerged region called Kerala, has been a widely accepted story that legendarily explains the formation of Kerala. There are many other similar myths that explicate the origin of Kerala like the story of Parasurama, but the commonly popularized myth is that of Parasurama and his axe. The brahmanical hegemony and lineage of Kerala has been sanctified by this popularly accepted myth of Parasurama (Varier 11).

The currency of this myth in the cultural context of Kerala must be a question of power relations. We may not even aware of the many forgotten stories of the past in the passage of time and structures of power relations. The same story which has mythically rendered an origin to the Kerala landscape has entered into the cyberspace also without any alteration.

For the analysis of the myth of Parasurama, the official web portal of Kerala, www.kerala.gov.in, tourism department's website www.keralatourism.org, another website named www.kerala.com, and facebook pages of Kerala such as “Kerala-Keralam (in Malayalam)” by www.kerala.gov.in, and “Kerala Tourism” run by www.keralatourism.org have been selected.

The web portal of Kerala government states:

Origin of Kerala has been linked to a legend dating back to Satya Yug. According to this legend, Kerala rose up from the sea when Lord Parasurama threw his axe into it and the sea receded to bring up this narrow

strip of land from underneath. Lord Parasurama, believed to be the sixth avatar of Lord Mahavishnu, threw his axe from Gokarnam southward across the ocean in rage and in repentance for his actions of killing Kshatriyas. The land of Kerala emerged from the waters of the Arabian Sea with the blessing of Varuna-the God of Oceans and Bhumidevi-the Goddess of Earth. The sobriquet “God's own Country” thus bestows itself on Kerala (“About Kerala”).

The tourism department of Kerala has already branded the expression “God's own Country” and made the same its tagline. Similarly the website www.kerala.com says: Kerala 'The God's own country' is blessed with various art forms....” (“Kerala Arts”). The two selected Facebook pages on Kerala use the sobriquet “God's own country” in their respective “About” pages.

Irrespective of their varied interests and aims, these websites use and exhibit the ancient myth of Kerala's origin. Philosopher Mary Midgley writes:

We have a choice of what myths, what visions we will use to help us understand the physical world. We do not have a choice of understanding it without using any myths or visions at all. Again, we have a real choice between becoming aware of these myths and ignoring them. If we ignore them, we travel blindly inside myths and visions, which are largely provided by other people. This makes it much harder to know where we are going (qtd. in Mosco 13).

Myths provide one with a tool that help to understand the social-spatial relations that one has to perform. They are culturally coded and hence play a significant role in the interpretation of social phenomena. It doesn't mean that they always say the truth; more than that, the concept of truth itself is relative and problematic. Yet myths play a role in formulating a perception of the world where one lives in.

As it is observed, the websites and Facebook communities that I have selected use the myth of Parasurama either to describe the region of Kerala historically; or to exhibit and showcase its richness and glory. To explicate the cultural significance of this myth, the nature of power relations that are there in the social system must be understood. “Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or as something which only functions in the form of a chain ... Power is employed and exercised through a net like organization....” (Foucault, *Power* 98). This circulation of power is everywhere, visibly or invisibly, and “there are no *necessary* or universal forms for the exercise of power to take place....” (McHoul, and Grace 65). The cyberspace is also permeated with multiple power relations and it is unlike the age-old concept of the sovereign form of power. The space of technology is a discursive space where relations of power have both productive and exclusory functions.

The myth which postulates the hegemonic supremacy of brahmanical power over the land of Kerala has been taken and adapted into the cyberspace to describe and validate the socio-cultural position of this region in a technologically augmented context. Knowingly or unknowingly the adaptation of this myth into this virtual space embeds the global space with an element of antiquity. But this antiquity can be seen positively as well as negatively. He also says that “I am not referring to Power with a capital P, dominating and imposing its rationality upon the totality of the social body. In fact, there are power relations. They are

multiple; they have different forms, they can be in play in family relations, or within an institution, or an administration” (“Critical” 38). And such a kind of power relation that takes place in the cyber Kerala communities has endowed the Parasurama myth a new significance.

While analyzing from a traditional perspective on power play, it can be summarized that the transmission of the mythical origin of Kerala from the offline world to the online space is effectuated as a part of the power play where the techniques and agents of power silently perpetuate the ancient hegemony of the powerful section of the society, and thereby assert the dominion of the accepted by excluding the less powerful sections of the region.

But viewed from a different vantage point, the adaptation of this myth and the subsequent sobriquet to explain Kerala to the internet space can be seen to have some productive functions. Though technically augmented, the space of internet now seems to be the most popular space for communication. This space itself is not real, yet it has an aura of reality attached to it. Through this space, interactions negating spatio-temporal barriers are possible. While taking the example of regional communities, here that of Kerala, people occupy a 'placeless' space within the cyber communities. What happens when the administrators of these various websites on Kerala and Facebook communities take this myth out of the offline cultural scenario of Kerala and place it in the new space of cyber world? They are actually transporting the myth from a cultural context to a contextless void where multiplicity of interactions are enabled among the users who are within a purely imagined community of technology.

This myth that has been adapted to the so-called modernity of cyberspace can be considered as a part of the discourse that comes within the norm of the 'accepted,' and not of the 'excluded.' As, according to Foucault,

there is in all societies, with great consistency, a kind of gradation among discourses: those which are said in the ordinary course of days and exchanges, and which vanish as soon as they have been pronounced; and those which give rise to a certain number of new speech acts which take them up, transform them or speak of them, in short, those discourses which, over and above their formulation, are said indefinitely, remain said, and are to be said again. (“Order” 57)

Such discourses that are marked as high in the classification of discourses form the accepted section and its statements are always circulated as they are supposed to be the producers of truth. Only those statements of the discourse are valid that would “be in the true.” Foucault says, “It is always possible one could speak the truth in a void; one would only be “in the true” however if one obeyed the rules of some discursive “police” which would have to be reactivated every time one spoke” (*Archaeology* 224). The gradation of discourse, the inclusion and acceptance of some statements at the cost of other statements are decided by the power relations that ascribe validity to statements on the basis of truth and falsity. And this myth produces statements of truth (by truth, it only means, statements that are valid) and hence it is circulated in the cyber Kerala communities.

The myth under study here attempts to carry out a contextualizing function. Within the virtual space of internet, an imagined community of Kerala has been generated by different websites. A myth from the accepted discourse has been carefully picked out and transplanted

into this cyber community of Kerala. It is not the mere entry of an ancient story; through this story a validation of an invented space is also taking place. The myth that has been a part of the accepted discourse of offline space, which has given an element of antiquity and cultural significance to the region of Kerala, has here accentuated the same functions in the cyber reincarnation of Kerala. Through this myth, the space of Kerala in the cyber world is localized; in short, a context of cultural significance is ascribed for the cyber Kerala communities.

The attempt here is not to evaluate the nature of power structure that has transformed the abstract space of internet into a cultural terrain, but to understand the process through which the power relations in the online and offline Kerala has generated a meaning for an internet community. As Foucault says “it's not a matter of emancipating truth from every system of power but of detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social economic and cultural, within which it operates at the present time” (*Power* 133).

The entry of the myth of Parasurama into the cyberspace has actually done a creative function in the cyber imagining of diverse Kerala communities. The element of antiquity which has been a necessary element of imagining of communities is here rendered through the manipulation of Parasurama's story. More than that, a cultural repository of meaning has been endowed to the new Kerala space in the internet world by this myth of Kerala formation.

Rather than stereotypically analyzing the power relations that contributed for the circulation of this particular myth with the cyberspace, a Foucauldian reading would thus reveal the cultural significance of a myth in the new terrain. The virtuality of an imagined space has been endowed with a vision of truth (by truth Foucault means those statements that are produced by those in power and not the veracity of statement) and hence a meaning by the underpinned play of power in the myth of Kerala origin. And for a moment, as Foucault says, “We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it “excludes”, it “represses”, it “censors”, it “abstracts”, it “masks”, it “conceals”. In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth” (*Discipline* 194).

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Shifting Emphasis: The Ideologies of Power and Catholic Culture in the works of Achebe, Adichie and Paton

Abstract

*Power is a tool of cultural relations in society as reflected in literature, a collective consciousness of shifting emphasis, especially so from the writer's perspective. The paper examines Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, positioning how Okonkwo, representing the native African rejected the catholic hegemony of the west, Adichie's *Americanah* where Ifemelu realizes the stark differences in the practice of Catholicism in her homeland and that in the west, and Alan Paton's *Cry the Beloved Country* where both the South African whites and blacks observe Catholicism, the traditional tribal structures being almost destroyed. The protagonists in both Adichie and Achebe are native black Igbos, probably so, they being black writers, the focus of narration always weighs to their side of history and culture; contrary view being almost impossible. On the other hand, in Alan Paton's *Cry the Beloved Country*, the blacks are pictured as a xenophobic race and the towering hero is a white, Arthur Jarvis who sacrificed his life for the sake of blacks along with his white father, James Jarvis who was able to sympathize with the black family of his son's murderer. Here, this white man becomes the very symbol of hope, the consensus between the black savagery and the white refinement.*

“Our role is to widen the field of discussion, not to set limits in accord with the prevailing authority.”

- Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*

Power is a tool of cultural relations in society as reflected in literature, a collective consciousness of shifting emphasis, especially so from the writer's perspective. This paper examines Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, positioning how Okonkwo, representing the stubborn native African rejected the catholic hegemony of the west, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Americanah* where Ifemelu realizes the stark differences in the practice of Catholicism in her homeland and that in the west, and Alan Paton's *Cry the Beloved Country* where both the South African whites and blacks observe Catholicism, the traditional tribal structures being almost destroyed. Catholicism is indubitably a religious culture associated with colonialism in the third world countries. It could well be argued that colonialism had denied Africa the right to set up a platform of cultural development and self expression and instead had set up a consensus with catholic ideals that were justified as cultural assimilation.

Things Fall Apart considered as the magnum opus of the great Nigerian novelist, Achebe (1930-2013) was the most acclaimed work of the 1950's when a group of young educated elites including Laye and Ngugi directed their works at people belonging to their socio-economic classes instead of broadening their target material over the native and/or the

foreign audiences in general. Achebe has not hesitated to portray the disabilities of the African society even before the colonial intrusion rejecting the possibilities of idealizing the African world. Years later, Adichie acclaimed as “the most prominent” of a “procession of critically acclaimed young anglophone authors [that] is succeeding in attracting a new generation of readers to African literature”, (Copnal, 20) belonging to a different generation who considers Achebe as her model also attempts to sketch the Catholic religious excesses found in Africa. Her *Americanah* is largely known as a novel that explores racism in America. Nevertheless it also gives poignant cues about the catholic ideals the African society is forced to observe.

Post colonial studies view this Catholic intrusion and conscious attempts for conversion being construed in the shadow of the white man's task in civilizing the blacks as a potent tool of exploitation and colonization. This fact is clear when in *Things Fall Apart* the white missionary, Mr. Brown who concentrated on 'increasing numbers' on one of his regular visits to Mbanta suggests, “When I think that it is only eighteen months since the Seed was first sown among you... I marvel at what the Lord hath wrought,” (*Things Fall Apart*, 118). The chord struck between religion, power and politics is too obvious to be noted.

No wonder, Obeirika points out to Okonkwo in a sad note that their protest against the whites would not materialize, “It is already too late ... our men and our sons have joined the ranks of the stranger. They have joined his religion and they help to uphold his government”, (*Things Fall Apart*, 128).

Achebe writes in a period when there is already a huge tug of war going on between natives clinging to their primitive beliefs and missionaries through the new converts who can be called as 'infidels of the native culture' trying to lure the former into the new and still unexplored charms of Catholicism. Adichie positions herself when Igbo world in Nigeria has already been completely converted into Catholicism. The age old dilemma or conflict as to which is better- the native traditions or the colonizers' Catholicism reflected in Achebe's works holds no prominence here. *Americanah* apart from an excellent work on racism also portrays the differences in the observations of Catholic religion over years and also over territories that Adichie voices through her powerful heroine, Ifemelu breaking all the former cultural female stereotypes. Ifemelu finds it difficult to relate to the holy masses in Lagos which have for her, changed tremendously. For instance, Ifemelu asks Ranyinudo as to why she was standing outside the church during the mass and Ranyinudo replies,

“All the bridesmaids had to wait outside because our dresses were indecent.” Ranyinudo rolled “indecent” around her tongue and chuckled. “It happens all the time, especially in Catholic churches. We even had cover-ups but the priest said they were too lacy, so we just waited outside until the mass ended. But thank God for that or I would not have met this guy!” (*Americanah*, 278).

Strangely, Ifemelu does not find anything odd in Ranyinudo's dress with “its thin straps and pleated neckline” - any cleavage was invisible and it could not in any way be claimed as immodest. Ifemelu remembered that while she was in America she used to see people going to churches in real indecent dresses with no body to throw them out. She vaguely remembered that before she had gone to America, bridesmaids wearing spaghetti strap dresses were not banished from church services. Suddenly Ifemelu feels insecure of not

being so sure about Lagos and about her native country any more. It can be well argued that such insecurity is either the result of an acquired religion and culture or the new changes forcibly brought into it that may be deemed to be irrational or illogical, about which one is never sure about.

Even in a personal interview that appeared in the *Atlantic*, she throws open her skeptical views of Catholicism, which developed from the initial infatuation towards the splendorous masses she had been accustomed to as a young girl to the rationale that appealed her feminist humanitarianism later on as years advanced,

“My teenage years brought a restless, searching skepticism. I was around 16 when I heard about the couple prohibited from receiving Holy Communion because their adult daughter had married a divorced (non-Catholic) man. This, according to the priest who banned them, was canon law. At communion, when others walked to the altar, I watched the couple kneel at their seats and bow their heads in what looked like shame. A devout couple, both wore scapulars around their necks. Communion was the glimmering, sacrificial center of Mass—it was the *raison d'être* of Mass. Why would this couple be so severely punished for the actions of an adult daughter?”

This revelation has got serious reflections in *Americanah* where her own mother shifts her focus to the “Believer's Church” and her dad simply supports her mom out of moral hold and genuine empathetic concerns even though he never withdraws from openly admitting to Ifemelu his rationale. Ifemelu sees her mother different at the age of ten with all her hair cut as she fetches a polyethylene bag into which her mother collects all the “Catholic objects” like the “crucifixes hung on walls, the rosaries nested in the drawers, the missals propped on shelves” to burn it in the same pit where she burns her used sanitary pads. When her mother was done she hugged the scared Ifemelu, and said, “I am saved,” (34). Such confusion as to which sect in Catholicism should one hold on to is clearly indicative of the confusion the acquired religion is never free from, at least so for the Africans.

“Mrs. Ojo ministered to me this afternoon during the children's break and I received Christ. Old things have passed away and all things have become new. Praise God. On Sunday we will start going to Revival Saints. It is a Bible-believing church and a living church, not like St. Dominic's,” (*Americanah*, 34).

Ifemelu's mother inspired by this new church went on fasting till Ifemelu thought one day she would simply snap into two and die. This change also did not last long, for she had another vision of an angel “holding a book trimmed in red thread, telling her to leave Revival Saints because the pastor was a wizard who attended nightly demonic meetings under the sea” (*Americanah*, 35). She joined Miracle Spring which let women grow their hair but not jewels and this also did not last long. Soon the angel appeared again, asking her to join the “Guiding Assembly”. The logic being, if we worshipped with the rich, God would also reward her with prosperity as he had already blessed the other people with.

There are also subtle clues that the “devil” frequently mentioned in *Americanah* is actually associated more with the native African traditions. When in an impulse Ifemelu herself destroyed her relationship with Curt,

“She wished she believed in the devil, in a being outside of yourself that

invaded your mind and caused you to destroy that which you cared about” (211) .

Catholic Traditions have the concepts of the good angel and the bad angel seated on one's own shoulder which tempts one to good and bad respectively. The devil mentioned here is more outside than inside. Moreover being converted to Catholicism, does not mean a complete abandonment of native traditions, for instance, when the idea of Ifemelu's marriage came, her father asked her why should she have a 'negro' for a husband when there are still lot many eligible Nigerians. Though the next question her mother asked was whether he was a Christian, she made it clear that traditional Igbo customs like “knocking the door, bride price, and wine carrying” (228) cannot be compromised on any account though for convenience sake the only compromise that could be done was to arrange it all in one go. It must be understood that though the Igbos have accepted the Catholic faith of the colonizers, the feeling has not completely superseded their beliefs of the ancestors and spirits.

Alan Paton (1903-1988) was a South African English white writer and a public figure hated by the Apartheid government of South Africa and abroad whose entry into the literary world started with *Cry, the Beloved Country* published in 1948 exactly ten years earlier to Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (pub. 1958). It is the story of the Reverend Stephen Kumalo who receives a letter from a fellow minister at Johannesburg informing that his sister Gertrude was very ill and he needed to set off to the city at the earliest. Kumalo had two intentions though. One was obviously saving and bringing back Gertrude, who in reality had become a prostitute and a liquor- seller and the other was to search for his own son, Absalom. The story is set in Zululand, one of the territories chosen for early missionary work. The names of the major native characters are Christian unlike the traditional names that Achebe and Adichie chose for their works. That one black protagonist in the work is a notable parson whose aim is to bring his people in the folds of Catholic morality is also notable. When Stephen Kumalo finds out that his son Absalom has been arrested for murdering a prominent white crusader for social equality he is completely shattered, though Absalom declares that the murder was not intentional having been assisted also by two other people, of which one was his own uncle, John Kumalo's son.

Contrary to the themes adopted in Achebe and Adichie, where the native man is tormented by the white men, Paton goes on to substantiate the black atrocities against the whites. The fact that the natives are themselves engaged in talk against their own fellows is noteworthy. Msimangu speaks to Kumalo,

“One of our boys snatched a bag there from an old white woman and she fell to the ground and died of shock and fear. And there was a terrible case of a white woman who lived by herself in a house not far from here, and because she resisted some of our young men who broke in, they killed her. Sometimes too white men and women sit in their cars in the dark under the trees on the Pretoria Road; and some of our young men sometimes rob and assault them, sometimes even the women. It is true that they are often bad women, but that is the one crime we dare not speak of,” (42).

Even the other white protagonist, James Jarvis becomes an excellent Christian model encompassing the virtues of holy forgiveness and empathy in declaring that he has forgiven Kumalo and his son for the grave injustice of killing his one and only son, Arthur Jarvis. Very

soon, Arthur Jarvis's young son links with Kumalo in a deep relationship which paves the way for James Jarvis to help the village by sending milk, making prospects to build dam and even devise equipments and plans for easier agricultural set-up. Jarvis even thanks Kumalo for the wreath he sent on Jarvis' wife's funeral who without scope for further doubt had succumbed to the inevitable due to a broken heart. This relieves Kumalo of a transfer and he is allowed to continue in the same parish where Jarvis promises to build a new Church. Thus Christian cosmology and universal brotherhood are the major themes in *Cry the Beloved Country* which ends with the lament and despair of both the old protagonists over lost sons and with the hope of a bright future of whites -blacks' unity.

“He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart,” (Achebe,152) voices the predicament of the colonized nations, for the occident has worked its way towards disrupting the entire balance on which the orients were built, using their religion (Christianity) and also their power. This strange predicament can be considered on an equally serious note on all third world countries too. Though several literary artists including the Nobel Prize laureate Wole Soyinka, have evolved aesthetic visions surrounding the interplay of African traditionalism and Christian cosmology, other artists like Achebe have strongly laid emphasis on socio-political impacts of the clash between the indigenous and European religious orbits. Here, the Catholic Church is portrayed indubitably as a social and political actor. In this broad graph extending from the universalism to cultural relativism, most critics have agreed that Adichie largely falls into the Achebe group though her views are also shaped by a larger profundity of feminine cultural experiences (Tunca, 3).

Both Achebe and Adichie have through their works, positioned in the literary canon separating a period of fifty years underlined the “mad logic of trinity” (Tunca, 9) where the Father and the Son are proclaimed as equals. In Paton's *Cry the Beloved Country*, the Father who sacrificed his only son working for the redemption of the ignorant, hopeless and miserable blacks may also be metaphorically construed as a Father – Son Biblical model. As per Catholic traditions, God sacrificed his only son, Jesus for the redemption of men's sins on earth. Such metaphorical models are ever missing in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* where Okonkwo is ashamed of his coward and effeminate father, Unoka, to the extent that he hated his own eldest son, Nwoye for having inherited his grandfather's traits. Though Okonkwo murdered his adopted son, Ikemefuna, it also cannot be considered anywhere near metaphorical of the Catholic Sacrifice of Son of God. Moreover, Ikemefuna was killed to keep up high the spirits of Okonkwo's traditional beliefs.

Many a times Adichie has trespassed the Catholic logic of 'God as Saviour' to the more practical and logical stances of the tenet 'why God works in mysterious ways' just like that of Achebe and this shows that though the writers are separated by a generation, they still find their ideologies rooted in the same ground, their criticisms unanimously pointed in the same direction in the same punch. It is also clear that the distinctions of gender and age hardly matters in the formation of their perceptions regarding the white man and the use of his religion for a higher motive of power and politics. Also, these writers arrive at a consensus on the level of Catholic domination on their indigenous cultures. Putting in the right note in both material and spiritual terms, African natives have seen the colonizer's Christian God as a “portion to prosper” and as prayers to this God as “delusional battles with imaginary traducers” (Adichie, 36).

It could hence be concluded that the protagonists in both Adichie and Achebe are native black Igbos, probably so, they being black writers, the focus of narration always weighs to their side of history and culture; contrary view being almost impossible. On the other hand, in Alan Paton's *Cry the Beloved Country*, the blacks are pictured as a xenophobic race and the towering hero is a white, Arthur Jarvis who sacrificed his life for the sake of blacks along with his white father, James Jarvis who was able to sympathize with the black family of his son's murderer. Here, this white man becomes the very symbol of hope, the consensus between the black savagery and the white refinement. This shift in emphasis of power and ideologies of Catholic culture could be explained only in postcolonial terms where the white writer respects and holds a high regard of his religious upbringing and ways he has been accustomed to while the native writers try to position themselves on platforms of cross-cultural interactions denoting polyvalent sites of contradicting ideological struggles.

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Disrupting “the Moral”: Kiss of Love and the Politics of Sexual Morality in Kerala

Abstract

“Where there is power there is resistance...If there was no resistance, there would be no power relations ...So I think that resistance is the main word, the key word, in this dynamic.”

- Michael Foucault (*Power/Knowledge* 176)

The Kiss of Love (KOL) protest, which started in Kerala on November 2, 2014 and later spread to other parts of India raised several questions regarding notions of morality prevailing in Kerala society today. The protest makes it necessary to look into the larger politics behind the age-old practice of accepting a specific set of do's and don'ts as the moral codes of a particular society. It gives us enough scope to approach the notion of sexual morality as something evolved in relation to the inner dynamics of power, and to understand how it acts as a useful tool in the hands of various power structures in society.

This paper investigates the socio-cultural factors which necessitated the KOL protest. It traces the genealogy of sexual morality and moral policing in Kerala society back to the reconstituted class, caste and gender equations that evolved in the context of Kerala modernity. It also examines the possibility of the moral codes that constitute the modern nuclear family system in Kerala being interwoven with the capitalist enterprise. The paper argues that the moral codes of present day Kerala were shaped and maintained by various power structures throughout its history. As a result, the notion of sexual morality prevailing in Kerala today becomes an ideological site of power and control. It always operates through power relations in the society which maintain social hierarchies based on class, caste and gender. This necessitated a counter action from the margins. When the notion of sexual morality becomes a site where various forms of power integrate, naturally a site of counter power develops through the amalgamation of various powers on the margins. The Kiss of Love (KOL) protest acquires much significance when we identify its revolutionary potential as a form of resistance which was shaped through the unification of hitherto silenced voices from the margins. It openly challenged the legitimacy of “the moral” itself thereby exposing the ideological investments gone into its making.

“You can cut all the flowers but you cannot keep spring from coming.”

- Pablo Neruda (*The Sea and the Bells* 132)

The Kiss of Love (KOL) protest, which started in Kerala on November 2, 2014 and later spread to other parts of India raised several questions regarding notions of morality prevailing in Kerala society today. The protest makes it necessary to look into the larger politics behind the age-old practice of accepting a specific set of do's and don'ts as the moral codes of a particular society. It gives us enough scope to approach the notion of morality as

something evolved in relation to the inner dynamics of power, and to understand how it acts as a useful tool in the hands of various power structures in society. In order to unravel the political and ideological ramifications of KOL protest and the ways in which it disrupts the mechanics of power in the society, it is important to investigate the socio-cultural factors that necessitated it.

The protest was organised by a group of youngsters in Kochi against the rising instances of what they called “moral policing” in the state. “Moral police” is a blanket term used to describe vigilante groups which act to enforce a code of morality in India (“Moral Police” *Telegraph*). The country has several such vigilante groups that claim to protect the so-called Indian culture. They resist and oppose behaviours, attitudes and practices which are deemed as “immoral” as per the moral standards set by them. There were instances in which they attacked bars and pubs and beat up girls for “indecent” dressing and behaviour. Some of these groups have attacked or have forced to shut down art exhibitions, where they claim obscene paintings were being displayed (“Who Will Control” *Hindu*). Moral police in India have several things in common with the Islamic religious police in Muslim-dominated countries and Christian/Modesty Patrols in Britain (“Muslim Patrol” *Herald Sun*). A notable feature of these guardians of morality is that the set of behaviours, attitudes and practices which they consider as “moral” is always the one preferred by the hegemonic socio-political and cultural forces in the society. It becomes obvious that moral policing is nothing but another manifestation of the ideology of dominant power structures in the society.

The issue of moral policing in Kerala society mostly revolves around the question of sexual morality. The recent instances of moral policing in the state bear testimony to this fact. The state has become increasingly intolerant towards sexual behaviours and practices which go beyond the domain of the dominant. The Downtown episode was not an isolated one, and in a sense was part of a long series of incidents of moral policing that the state had witnessed in the last decade. The incidents of moral policing in Kerala clearly expose the anxieties and apprehensions of the socio-political and cultural mainstream, regarding matters concerning man-woman relationships outside family and marriage, female sexuality, and increased female presence in the public spheres of the state. The notion of morality, especially sexual morality, becomes a site where various political parties, religious organisations, general public and the state act and think in unison, laying aside all other differences. It is a matter beyond contention that every society constructs its own set of moral codes or standards which clearly demarcate the boundaries between dos and don'ts, normal and deviant, acceptable and unacceptable, in relation to the power dynamics within it. In order to understand the ways in which various power structures shaped the moral codes of the contemporary Kerala society, we need to look at the genealogy of sexual morality in modern Kerala.

Sexual morality broadly “symbolises the social norms that regulate, measure and distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate forms of sexual desire defining deviant and normal forms of sexuality” (Kumaramkandath 3). The notion of sexual morality or *sadacharam* as it is popularly phrased in Malayalam, as understood in Kerala society today was primarily shaped during the period of modernity (5). Sexuality debates have remained the nerve centre of modernity in Kerala. Debates about sexual morality were also always debates about becoming modern and progressive. The notions of sexual morality became intimately interwoven with such overwhelming ideas of modernity as nation and progress

which worked together and produced definitions of legitimate and illegitimate forms of desire (9).

Indian attitudes towards sex, gender and male-female relationships underwent radical transformations during the colonial period (12). The close links between notions of civilised sexual appetite and notions of social progress, foregrounded by colonial/postcolonial discourses of modernity, have been critical in framing the contemporary attitudes towards sexual morality (19). The connotations of sexual morality as understood here as a modern term, were generated from the interface between the coloniser and the colonised in the 19th century; this was then usefully projected, by the coloniser and the local elites, to the local cultures in order to identify and define the non-normative elements in their customs and practices (Kumaramkandath 13). During and post the colonial regime, the local elites inherited and popularised the coloniser's perceptions of sexual morality, i.e. Victorian morality, which they identified as an essential component of a progressive modern society. A modern sexual moral order was prescribed and presented under the promises of modernisation and a progressive future (14).

According to Partha Chatterjee, producing narratives of the decadent, degenerated and uncivilised conditions that prevailed in the colonies provided the coloniser with necessary justification to intervene in the indigenous people's lives (96). Various discourses of colonialism produced and legitimized such narratives of pre-colonial barbarism. Vulgarising the locally embedded caste and gender relations from a modern perspective was part and parcel of the 19th century colonial project in Kerala (Arunima 25). In the context of Kerala, studies have already shown how the legal and structural apparatuses of colonial modernity have drastically changed the cultural terrains in the world of the colonised (Devika, "The Aesthetics" 459). At the centre of this project were the questions pertaining to sex and gender. Devika argues "that the formation of modern gender identities in late 19th and early 20th century Kerala was deeply implicated in the project of shaping governable subjects who were, at the one and same time, 'free' and already inserted into modern institutions" (461).

The interventions during the colonial periods have not only produced new dichotomies, like tradition/modernity, but also new histories and knowledge that have survived through popular memories (Kumaramkandath 56). For instance, the colonial framework of building an 'Indian tradition' on the basis of selected scriptures in the different regional contexts, to project their 'sexually uncivilised and reprehensive' moral systems was one relevant theme that dominated this trend (Kumaramkandath 134). The new normative order, produced by colonisers, intended to serve the needs of modernity homogenised the living patterns of people across the caste and religious divisions (136).

A series of reform movements and activities were initiated by the colonial administration and later taken up by the local intelligentsia. Reform movements in colonial and postcolonial periods involved conspicuous attempts to reform the indigenous culture from its supposedly "degenerated" conditions (Chatterjee 176). Studies in the different linguistic and cultural contexts of India have already addressed colonial transformations and the meticulousness with which body was assigned new meanings by the reform discourse (145). The colonial transformations have indeed critically remapped the sexual and gender to the colonies; this apart from introducing new bodies of ideas about sociality, self-discipline, nation, and so on which remained at the heart of constituting new subjectivities (147). This was also a period when newly emerged interests of caste and class conjoined the Victorian patriarchal moral

notions to constitute modern gender forms (Kodoth 380).

The colonial intervention in the socio-political, cultural and economic landscape of Kerala and the various reform movements that followed brought about radical changes to the existing values and practices in the region (384). The notions of sexual morality have undergone changes in relation to the changing systems of kinship and property relations, conjugal rights, man-woman relationships and gender norms. The existence of matriliney as a system that governed property relations and sexual organisation was a significant factor that governed the power dynamics of Kerala society in the period of modernity (Kodoth 383). It has also contributed to the production of a popular myth about Kerala as a 'female dominated society' (Arunima 140). In such a system, property was handed down through the eldest woman of the family. The system was called *marumakkathayam* in Malayalam, suggesting the centrality of the nephew, (*marumakan*) and by inference the uncle (*ammaman*), in the structure, thus underscoring the lineage through the mother, who is the link between the two (36). The conjugal system which was called *Sambandham* allowed Namboothiri men to have sexual relationship with Nair women. The woman could stay in her own family home while her male partner had visiting rights. This allowed her children to be seen as part of her family (rather than the father's) and to be the inheritors of the property controlled by the uncle. The women, it has been suggested, had an important role to play in the ownership and management of the property (Arunima 68).

Abolition of matriliney was one of the most visible sites of colonial legal intervention in Kerala. Recasting matriliney in order to construct patrilineal family as the base unit for the society of Kerala to enter into modernity is considered as a milestone in its modern history (Arunima 89). It is by now widely accounted that nearly 50 percent of the Malayalee population belonging to different castes and communities followed matriliney in, and in the period before, the 19th century (90).

G. Arunima testifies that the matrilineal kinship system in Kerala has so far been the only kinship system in the world that was abolished through legal measurements (96). The enactment of the Malabar Marriage Act in 1896 – considered to be the first and most important step in the direction of abolishing all non-monogamous, non-normative conjugal relationships in Kerala –was an event that occurred amidst a liberal discourse of progress, freedom and individual identity (98).

Through this Act the institution of monogamous patrilineal marriage was produced as the historically progressive form over the “trammels of the joint family system” (128). The youngsters from upper class Nair families who were behind the movement managed to gain control over the matrilineal family properties as well as the sexuality and fertility of Nair women. The reason for demanding the promulgation of this Act was that it enabled the newly emerging conjugal unities within Nair caste to be considered as “respectable” as opposed to “concubinage” – as per the observations made in some of the previous High Court judgments. It also helped those Nair men who had entered into new occupations under colonial administration with the help of English education to divert their income to the husband-wife conjugal units instead of channelling it into the joint family pool (128-130). Arunima draws our attention to the emergence and usage of a new set of terms around these incidents, like “concubinage” to signify traditional forms of marriage (135).

The passing of the Madras Marumakkathayam Act 1932 which legalised all

Sambandham, hitherto seen by the colonial legal system as not constituting marriage became another reason for the concretisation of the nuclear family system based on monogamous marriage in Kerala (Subramanian 321). The ritual of “*pudamuri*” or the offering of a piece of cloth by the man to the woman, which the Act named marriage, was now to be carried out in the daytime (unlike the earlier practice of it being carried out in the night) in an attempt to make it a public act, now under the purview of the law. The Act “sealed the demise of the households by legitimising its partition into branches, by either a male or a female member, as well as ratifying the right of wives and children to inherit a man's property and succeed to it” (Arunima 177). This therefore allowed for the formation of smaller households with the male as the head. The “husband” and the “father” were thus legally produced by this Act.

The shift from matriliney to patriliney in the context of modernity must be understood primarily in relation to two changes: (a) changing family structures, that is, the formation of nuclear families and the resultant restructuring of economic activity within and without the family and, (b) the way female sexuality came to be understood in the context of new conjugal models (Radhakrishnan 235). The move away from joint families to nuclear families as the normative structure of modern conjugality was the most important change that happened at this time. New notions of romantic love and conjugality intrinsically connected to the formation of the nuclear family produced notions of female sexuality, especially in the form of moral norms like monogamy, which were quite different from those of the earlier days (Radhakrishnan 246). In this context, it is important to identify the relations that exist among the notions of power, family, monogamous marriage, private property and finally the sexual morality which was shaped by the interplay of all these notions.

Friedrich Engels in his *The Origin of the Family, Private property and the State* (1884) argues that the first domestic institution in human history was not the family but the matrilineal clan (19). Primitive communism, according to Engels, was based in the matrilineal clan where polygamous man-woman relationships existed. But the rise of private property disempowered women by triggering a switch to patrilocal residence and patrilineal descent. Engels added political impact to this, describing the “overthrow of mother right” as “the world-historic defeat of the female sex”; he attributed this defeat to the onset of farming and settled life (28).

According to Engels, the rise of private property shaped the notions of modern nuclear family and monogamous marriage. The patriarchal society developed a new system of man-woman relationship in which a man's wealth and property will be inherited by his own children (Engels 41). Here comes the notions of purity and chastity of women. Thus relationship based on marriage became the only legitimate form of sexual relationship between men and women and children born out of wedlock became “illegitimate”. This resulted in the development of modern nuclear families based on monogamous marriage. The system made it necessary to discipline and control sexuality and man-woman relationships. Woman became a private property of man who needs to be controlled and kept within the confines of the household so that her “sexual purity” can be ensured (48). Thus the beginning of the notions of sexual morality can be found in the origins of nuclear family, private property and monogamous marriage. Various power structures in the modern capitalist society including the state made it their task to dictate norms regarding normal and deviant forms of sexual behaviour and man-woman relationship which gradually

crystallised as what we call sexual morality today.

Engel's take on the rise of private property and the subsequent development of nuclear family based on monogamous practices becomes significant in the context of Kerala modernity. A gradual transformation from matriliney to patriliney and from *Marumakkathayam* to *Makkathayam* and the abolition of polygamous practices like *Sambandham* had brought about changes to kinship patterns, property relations and to the organisation of the family as a whole. There were also shifts in terms of power relations with regard to class, caste and gender. We can see what Engels described as the “historic defeat of the female sex” in this scenario as well. In the modern nuclear family setup which replaced the traditional joint family system in Kerala, men became the heads or ultimate authorities. These changes had significant bearings on the shaping of sexual morality in modern Kerala.

An understanding of the genealogy of sexual morality in modern Kerala will be complete only when we look at the ways in which the notion of a pre-modern period of anarchy (especially sexual) and decadence have been invoked in various narratives and discourses governed by different power structures in the society (Kumaramkandath 41). Hegemonic structures “construct” histories and knowledge systems through which these narratives acquire legitimacy and become part of the cultural memory of the mainstream. The construction of our past as sexually anarchic is constantly reproduced in modern history through different forms of representation. The propaganda was especially strong around 'non normative' systems like matriliney, polyandry and *Sambandham* and occupied a central place in the civilising mission initiated by coloniser in the 19th century (42-45). In the current moral perceptions and the organisation of public sphere in Kerala, this past holds a particular significance to the extent that it critically informs the progressive politics of modern sexuality (47-51).

Smarthavicharam – the trial of Namboothiri women (*antharjanam*) accused of adultery and sexual infidelity – has remained a potential site for discourses of sexual morality from early modern Kerala to the present (Kumaramkandath 54). An instance of *smarthavicharam* in the early 20th century and the huge controversy that erupted following this incident quickly captured the centre stage in the ongoing reformation enterprises in Kerala. The trial and its subject Thathrikkutty have ever since remained familiar in its cultural terrains owing mainly to the moral anxieties it unleashed during its occurrence. In the history of sexuality in Kerala this common presence has a critical significance for its construction in the public pronouncements cement ideas of pre-modern sexual anarchy and the progressive turn brought in by the modern moral paradigm. The construction and reconstruction of this event in popular memories throughout modern history have most effectively borrowed from knowledge produced during the early colonial regime about the 'uncivilized conditions' that characterized the local culture (Kumaramkandath 58).

The living memories of *smarthavicharam* and Thathrikkutty provide us with some of the most powerful imageries through which discourses of progressive sexual morality are regenerated time and again. In fact, Thathrikkutty's was the first ever incident in modern history of Kerala that was discussed widely within the Malayalee public sphere from a modern moral perspective (61). The moral fermentation that Thathrikkutty's incident caused had deep and wider significance that it continues to be a live presence in discussions of *sadacharam* in the contemporary society. Embedded within the larger discourse of sexual morality, the narratives around *smarthavicharam* and Thathrikkutty had shifting and

complicated trajectories where Thathrikkutty, initially identified as inciting shame for the whole Malayalee society, especially the Namboothiri community, was later reassigned as an icon of vengeance (62). Within this common reading Thathrikkutty emerges as the first ever woman who deployed her sexual prowess to fight against the patriarchal sexual anarchy that prevailed among Namboothiri- a community whose scriptures and customs were privileged in the early knowledge production undertaken by the western anthropologists and colonial administrators (63).

Moral codes regarding sexuality which was shaped during the period of modernity were subsequently assimilated into the cultural fabric of the Malayalee public sphere. Various patriarchal and elitist power structures and the discourses and institutions under their control had played an instrumental role in shaping those moral standards. Incidents like *Smarthavicharam* in which Brahminical patriarchy had donned the mantle of modern day moral police were evoked time and again and this became a central element in our cultural memory regarding sexual morality.

As K. Venu has rightly pointed out, the works of Christian missionaries who played a crucial role in shaping the educational system of modern Kerala too was significant in this regard (57-58). They propagated the European standards of sexual morality in Kerala. Their teachings regarding sexuality were centred on the Biblical notion of sin. Unlike the rest of India, Kerala society has a significant Muslim and Christian presence. They constitute around fifty percent of the population in Kerala. These two communities with their extremely orthodox conceptions regarding gender and sexuality played a pivotal role in shaping the moral standards of modern Kerala (59-60).

There emerged a consensus regarding sexual morality among various political parties, religious organizations, and the state. These three forces could effectively mediate and control the imagination of the entire bourgeois public sphere in Kerala. It was the result of collusion among these power blocks that the normal and deviant behaviours and practices regarding sexual morality were constructed. Various ideological state apparatuses and other discourses governed by these power groups demarcated the boundaries between the do's and don'ts regarding sexual morality. They idealised the sanctity of bourgeois family institution which revolves around the authority of the father or husband. The construction of idealised notions of womanhood and femininity like *Malayalee Manka* and *Kulasthree* which in turn produced deviant or immoral categories like “*Apadhasancharini*” and “*Chanthappennu*” was part and parcel of this project (Devika, “*Apadhasancharini*” *Kafila*). Gender norms which controlled the mobility and visibility of women in public sphere and their interactions with men outside family were similarly constructed by these forces.

The emergence of what we today call the “moral police” in Kerala is a natural consequence of these changing norms and practices mediated by socio-political and cultural centres of power. It was an amalgamation of diverse forces and interests with the single agenda of disciplining bodies and sexualities that gave rise to moral policing in Kerala. As Meena T. Pillai observes, “[p]olicing the intimate and affective spheres has become a norm, not only by the moral brigade but by the state police, as also other ideological state apparatuses, including religious, educational and familial institutions” (12). Apart from this, a range of other forces, “from the religious right-wing goons, to local goons who call themselves *nattukaar* – the local people, literally but the 'local moral police' actually, – and the 'guardian angelic moral police' of the law which tries to infantilise young people and keep

them under constant surveillance” (Devika, “Apadhasanchaarini” *Kafila*).

Devika makes a distinction between “Guardian angelic moral police (GAMP) and “Goonda-activist moral police” (G-AMP). Her use of these two terms becomes pertinent to our understanding of the ways in which these forces operate either directly or in a hegemonic manner. Devika notes:

Of all the different kinds of moral police that inhabit the land of Kerala, the species that should be feared the most must probably be the 'Guardian Angelic Moral Police' (GAMP). The GAMP is just as potent as the Goonda-Activist Moral Police (G-AMP) but in striking contrast to the latter, the former thrives on the surface precisely on values dear to the Malayalee middle-class – the sanction of law, paternal concern, state protectionism of women as the 'weaker sex'. This makes it much harder for victims of moral policing to fight off their intrusions all of which are couched in the language of benevolent concern. (“Apadhasanchaarini” *Kafila*)

Here the nature of moral policing acquires a hegemonic character. It becomes part of our common sense and consent. It also becomes ideological at another level when we unconsciously assimilate and follow their moral dictates. The lives of men and women in Kerala come under the constant surveillance of these guardians of morality in different guises.

The moral codes of present day Kerala were shaped and maintained by various power structures throughout its history. As a result, the notion of sexual morality prevailing in Kerala today is an ideological site of power and control. It operates through power relations which maintain social hierarchies based on class, caste and gender. This necessitated a counter action from the margins. When the notion of sexual morality becomes a site where various forms of power integrate, naturally a site of counter power develops through the amalgamation of various powers on the margins. The Kiss of Love (KOL) protest acquires greater significance when we identify its revolutionary potential as a form of resistance which was shaped through the unification of hitherto silenced voices from the margins. It openly challenged the legitimacy of “the moral” itself thereby exposing the ideological investments that went into its making.

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Autobiography as a Site of Counter Power: a Study with Special Reference to *The Autobiography of a Sex Worker*

Abstract

Power always produces a counter power or a powerful resistance. That is a political power capable of challenging the dominant power that is imposed upon the power less. Autobiography is generally considered as a literary space where the icons of the society explain their lives to the people. But today, it has become a weapon for the marginalized to assert both their identity and the identity of their community. It acts as a powerful medium to express dissent or question the power mechanism operating in the society.

This paper intends to critically analyse autobiography as a site of counter power by studying the autobiographies of Nalini Jameela (Autobiography of a sex Worker) and Sr. Jesme (Amen). These women are doubly marginalized by virtue of their sex and their social status. So their writings are voices from the margin of the margin. This paper attempts to study how these women use autobiography as a powerful tool to exert their power as women to break the Lakshman Rekha of gender and social taboos that powerful sections of the society imposed upon them. For them unlike the icons of the society, writing autobiography is a political act of establishing their identity against the identity that the society imposed on them.

Key words: Power, Counter power, autobiography, identity politics, and gender.

*Pitharakshathikaumare,
Bharthurakshathiyauvane,
puthrorakshathivardhake,
Nah sthreeswathantryaarhathi (Manusmruthi chapter 9 Verse 4).*

The above lines underscore the position of a woman in a patriarchal society. She is under man's governance from her birth to death. Where, men always control the power and women/marginalised section always subjected to the power operations.

The present paper inquires the ways in which autobiography acts as a powerful medium to exercise a counter power against the power centres. In a more specific way, the study analyses how the underprivileged women expose their own identities, which is different from the identity that the society attributed to them. This study defines 'identity explosion' as a surging forth of a marginalized or underprivileged individual in an attempt to define herself through her writing, thus dismantling the social status attributed to her by external agencies. To quote the words of Linda Anderson, she says:

While these autobiographical writings constructed the subject through strict narrative and linguistic conventions in order to create a transcendental version of selfhood, for women, they could also offer an alternative space, a place from which to contest their socially sanctioned positions of silence and submission. (Anderson 34)

The autobiographies of women like Nalini Jameela, Ajitha, C. K Janu and Sr. Jesme have paved a new way for women and other marginalized groups to come out in open display of their identities and point their finger towards the male power that controls our society. The autobiographical works considered above discuss not only a particular person's life but also the plight of her community. Linda Anderson quotes Julia Swindells, an English writer and editor of the work *The Uses of Autobiography Gender and Society Feminist Perspectives*:

Autobiography now has the potential to be the text of the oppressed and the culturally displaced, forging a right to speak both for and beyond the individual. People in a position of powerlessness—women, black people, working class people—have more than begun to insert themselves into the culture via autobiography, via the assertion of a 'personal' voice which speaks beyond itself. (Anderson 103-104)

Identity politics involves politicizing of the identity of an individual or a group through writing. In such a case an individual problematizes her own identity, in order to question the identity which socio-cultural norms have conferred on her.

The word 'politics' means, according to the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, the activities aimed at improving someone's status within an organization or the principle relating to or inherent in a sphere or activity especially when concerned with power and status (Catherine 1110). While considering the first meaning, the autobiographer through politicizing her identity tries to improve her status within the society. Politics has got a vital space in autobiography when a marginalized and underprivileged individual writes her autobiography with a specific intention. So autobiographies of such individuals become a political space, where principles of power and identity creation are at work.

In order to overcome the oppression, the less privileged have used writings, especially self narratives. As a result, politics claims a space in autobiography. She narrates different experiences which she has undergone as a woman or as a marginalized individual, and argues against the social injustice. Through autobiography she makes her voice powerful and prominent. Julia Watson and Sidonie Smith have argued that “the marginalized subject, by deploying autobiographical practices that go against the grain can constitute an 'I' that becomes a place of creative and, by implication, political interventions” (Anderson 103).

Nalini Jameela, a woman coming from an extreme social situation, has made powerful waves in this conservative and patriarchal society through her autobiography. Her work has wounded the so called moral watch dogs of the society. Jameela through her autobiography, *The Autobiography of a Sex Worker*, declares her identity as a sex worker and as a woman though it is against the socially awarded identity of hers. As a citizen of India she uses her fundamental right of expression, to establish her identity/identities.

Nalini Jameela, now a social activist, came into the public view in Kerala in 2005 by publishing her autobiography, *Njan, Laingikatozilaali*. Jameela made a bold attempt in the history of sex workers by writing the autobiography, which questions the rigid and age-old male-oriented societal attitude towards sex workers. Even though Kamala (Das) Surayya tried to express her life story through her autobiography entitled *My Story* she had to withdraw her controversial autobiography by calling it a fictional one, because of the resistance from the patriarchal society. Unlike Kamala (Das) Surayya, it is a necessity for Jameela to sustain her autobiography, because it is a powerful means for her to establish her

identity as well as the identity of other sex workers in her community. J. Devika says: “For Nalini Jameela, a successful autobiography was her way of establishing herself as a public person, while testifying the oppression of sex workers in public” (viii).

As a woman plays multiple roles in the society, her identity exhibits a hybrid nature. While Jameela exposes her identity as a sex worker, she also discusses her other identities as a woman, mother, wife, daughter, social worker etc. So along with reconstructing her identity as a sex worker, she establishes her other identities too. Amartya Sen in his work *Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny* says: “Our freedom to assert our personal identities can sometimes be extraordinarily limited in the eyes of others, no matter how we see ourselves” (Sen 6). Through her autobiography, Nalini Jameela tries to overcome these limits.

Daughterhood is the primary phase of development in a woman's life. “Feminist psychoanalysts agree that the construction of women's gender identity is interdependent with our psychic and cultural experience as daughters” (Humm 57). The entire life of Jameela reflects the life she had led as a daughter. The initial smoothness of her life changed when her mother lost her work and their only source of income stopped. The male chauvinist father and poverty forced her to find wage work, which ultimately took her to the world of prostitution.

It is in the family that “the ideological ground on which gender difference and women's oppression are constructed” (Humm 87). This is true in the case of Nalini Jameela. Though in front of the society her father was a true communist and preached equality, at home Nalini's father was patriarchal to the core and treated his wife and children like slaves.

The economic status of a person also determines her position in the family. When her mother lost her source of income, they had to depend on one of Nalini's aunts for food and at the same time had to tolerate the cruelties of her father. When this became unbearable, Nalini decided to go to work. Thus she became a wage worker at the age of nine. She says: “I thought people would dismiss me as a child, if I wore a skirt and, instead I went to work in a lungi, all tightly wound around me” (Jameela 7). Simon de Beauvoir in her work *The Second Sex* points out that there are many girls who are seduced in work places (570). In her autobiography, Nalini Jameela describes the attitude men, at her work place, had towards women. She mentions persons like Anthony, Babu and the like who wanted to have sex with her. She says:

Walking through the fields one day, I found myself right in front of Anthony. I had no doubt that he'd grab me. How was I to wriggle out of this? I happened to see an acquaintance, Chandran, approaching from a distance. I shouted to him. For a second, Anthony's attention was distracted, and I shoved him into the field below and ran for my life (Jameela 15-16).

As a woman Nalini has suffered both physical and mental tortures in the male-oriented society. Such societies consider women as mere objects to satiate the carnal pleasures of men. For them whether the woman is mature or not is not at all a matter. Ittamash's behaviour towards Jameela amply illustrates the society's attitude towards women. Jameela explains his behaviour, thus: “Suddenly he crept up from behind me, and hugged me tightly” (Jameela 11). Jameela's is not an isolated experience of an underprivileged woman in the society. The newspapers report many such incidents on a daily basis. The Nirbhaya incident happened in 16th December 2012 is one of the most terrible examples.

To show the patriarchal attitude of the society towards women, Simon de Beauvoir quotes 'Tota Mulier in Utero'. Mulier says: "Woman is a womb" (Beauvoir 14). The patriarchal society considers woman as a thing to produce the next generation. She is only a vessel. Aristotle says: "The female is a female by virtue of a certain lack" (16). Jameela questions all the social norms that the patriarchal society has developed and used to suppress women. She, through her autobiography, attacks the 'moral watch dogs' of the society. In an interview, which appeared in *Mathrubhoomi Azhchappathipu*, M.Gangadharan points out that the Victorian morality that still exists in Kerala imposes many restrictions on woman (Gangadharan 28-35). There is a Lakshman Rekha, of 'good womanhood' around each woman and if any woman shows the courage to cross it, the society will label her as a bad woman (Swapna 9). The concept of chastity embedded in the societal notion of womanhood is an obstacle in the ways of woman. It is being used as a weapon by the male chauvinist society to attack women. Nalini Jameela through her autobiography tries to dismantle such socially constructed norms.

"In law, prostitution is defined as the hiring out of one's body for the purpose of sexual intercourse" (Humm 221). But feminist critics question the assumption of free choice which is obvious in this definition. Some of the experiences of Nalini Jameela, which she describes in her autobiography show that the free choice as implied in the legal definition is not correct. For example, she describes one of her experiences as a sex worker: "I hid in that garden, he'd find me. In the end I dug up sand in an open area to form a depression, lay down in it and covered myself with the sand" (Jameela 76). Concise Oxford Dictionary defines a prostitute as "a person, typically a woman, who engages in sexual activity in payment" (COD 1153). The autobiography of Nalini Jameela brings the attention of the reader to different aspects of the lives of sex workers and projects the identity of sex workers, which is contradictory to the socially attributed identity of theirs.

Nalini Jameela chose sex work as a profession in order to support her children. But when she realized that those for whom she chose this trade were against her, she wished (tried) to get out of the trade by getting married. Though she married twice, she could not sustain the relationships. When she re-entered into sex work, she says, her attitude towards it was entirely changed. Unlike most of the sex workers, Nalini Jameela now considers her profession as dignified as any other profession.

According to Nalini Jameela, in a male oriented society, the condition of a wife is not better than that of sex workers. In her work, *The Second Sex*, Simon de Beauvoir quotes the words of La Puberte Marrow:

The only difference between woman who sell themselves in prostitution and those who sell themselves in marriage is in the price and the length of time the contract runs, for both the sexual act is a service, the one is hired for the life by one man; the other has several clients who pay her by the price (Beauvoir 569).

Jameela's opinion supports Beauvoir's when she says:

Sex workers are free in four respects. We don't have to work for a husband, we don't have to wash his dirty cloths; we don't have to ask for his permission to raise our kids as we deem fit; we don't have to run after a husband claiming rights to his property (Jameela 85).

“The prostitute is a scape goat; man vents his turpitude upon her and he rejects her” (Beauvoir 569). The society is not at all bothered about whatever happens to her. Nalini Jameela cites an example for this. She describes the mystery behind the death of Ammu, a sex worker. She observes that though it is evident that she was killed by somebody, the police report showed it as an accident. M. Gangadharan describes a similar incident in Calicut, in his interview with Maya. The police arrested a lady called Kuhnjneevi in Calicut, accusing her of prostitution. The next day, she was seen hanging on the window sill of the police station. Though Ajitha, a social worker, demanded for a detailed enquiry on the death because of its mysterious nature, the District Collector concluded the investigation by reporting it as suicide (Gangadharan 28-35).

“Nineteenth century feminists struggled against the state regulation of prostitution. The struggle encouraged women to challenge male centres of power – the police, the parliament and the medical establishment” (Humm 221). Nalini Jameela too raises her voice against the injustice that the society shows towards sex workers. She criticizes the society that labels sex workers as criminals and those who use them as gentlemen. She says: “We aren't the only people who commit this crime. There are lawyers who come to us, there are doctors and businessmen. It isn't fair that all of them are considered respectable and we alone are made into criminals” (Jameela 69).

Nalini Jameela criticizes the way society addresses them. She likes to be known as Veshya / Prostitute because it indicates her field of work. Veshyas had been given a position in the ancient Indian society. She criticizes the society for calling a prostitute the mean terms like 'petti' and 'tatti'. Nagaravadhu (bride of the city) was a tradition of courtesanship followed in many parts of India. Amrapali was a Nagaravadhu in Vaishali, a local kingdom, in ancient India. Though she was a courtesan, Amrapali /Nagaravadhu was adored like a goddess.

Jameela's association with 'Jwalamukhi', a welfare association for sex workers, has contributed a lot to her identity as a sex worker. It is through 'Jwalamukhi' she got an opportunity to speak publically. She has raised her voice for the rights of the sex workers. Instead of lamenting the pathetic condition of the sex workers, she has faced it boldly and speaks about a solution. She inspires other prostitutes to think about the ways in which they can improve their position in the society. It is her association with Jwalamukhi that opened the world of social work before her. Jameela's entry into the public world was through the reorganizing of sex workers as part of AIDS prevention campaigns by NGO.

About her first experience in public speech, she says: “I had no idea what to say. All I knew was that, whatever I had to say, I had to say it aloud and clear” (Jameela 61). She has participated in different meetings related to sex work within the country and outside the country. She has taken part in meetings held at Thailand, Cambodia, Bangladesh, and Nepal.

As a mother, Jameela's position is different from that of ordinary mothers. In her autobiography, she shows the reader, two pictures of motherhood. One is Jameela herself and the other is her mother. Her mother was completely under the control of patriarchy (her father). She had no voice in her family. As a result, she failed to protect her daughter and lost her. On the contrary, Jameela represents a strong motherhood that protects her daughter in all adverse circumstances. Simon de Beauvoir discusses the plight of an unwed mother and her child. She holds that, “maternity in particular is respectable only for a married woman, the unwed mother remains an offence to public opinion and her child is a severe handicap for her

in life” (Beauvoir 457). When she entered into sex work, Nalini selected a distant place of operation and kept her children with her mother-in-law. She selected a distant place because she wanted to hide her profession from the natives to save her children from the label 'children of a sex worker'. Even though she had to beg to earn her livelihood, she protected her girl from the hands of men, because she was well aware that “when a door has once been broken open, it is hard to keep it shut” (Beauvoir 571).

Kate Millet defined politics as any power-structured relationship in which one group of persons is controlled by another. Identity politics means one problematizes and reconstructs the socially awarded identity of one's in order to overcome one's subordinate position. “Liberal Feminism is based on a politics of anti-discrimination and opposes laws that establish different rights for women and for men” (Humm 210). In describing different identities of hers, Nalini Jameela tries to dismantle the socially attributed identity of hers. She gives equal prominence to her identity as a sex worker and to her other identities. J. Devika says: “Jameela's autobiography reveals the exclusions of the dominant home-centred, self-controlled feminine ideal and challenges the prostitute stereotype” (*ASW* ix). Her politics is very clear when she says “I am a sex worker among the intellectuals”, not an “intellectual among the sex workers” (Jameela).

Another political aspect of Nalini Jameela's identity as a woman is that she does not like to live under the control of men (in other words subordination is unbearable to her). It is clear in her relationship with Vishwanathan (a client). When he tries to impose some restrictions upon her, she puts an end to that relationship.

Through her writings and activities Jameela tries to validate prostitution by law because when it comes under the protection of law nobody can attack them by the name of their vocation. Another political act is the revision of the first version of her autobiography. In an interview with J. Devika, she points out the reason for the rewriting of the first version of her autobiography. “When the first version came out, many thought that I-and my story-were not true. They thought this was fiction, that I wasn't a real person. Before this controversy had died down, I decided to rewrite my book, and that created much upheaval” (*ASW* 142).

The criticisms she had to face from different walks of the society after the publication of her autobiography is the clear indication of the impact of the counter power. The conservative Kerala society rejected her work by saying that it is an erotic discourse. M. Mukundan, one of the Kerala's prominent literary figures, condemned the book as a prurient money spinner. Some cultural heroes of Kerala opine that it will affect the society's moral value and will lead people to immorality. One notable thing is that it is the very society that accepted the autobiography of people like Balachandran Chullikadu, a notable writer of Kerala, (*Chithambara Smaranakal*) and N. N. Pillai (*Jhan*) whole heartedly and praised their open writing, which criticizes Jameela's honesty.

In the preface to *The Autobiography of a Sex Worker* Devika writes:

One reason why her work appeared shocking was that it challenged dominant image of decay as the inevitable culmination of a 'sinful life' instead, it highlighted the ordinariness of sex work in the lives of the poorest woman, its place alongside other strenuous, exploitative and demeaning work-situations quiet invisible to Kerala's educated elite (Devika-viii).

In *The Second Sex* Beauvoir discusses that many of the maids and domestic servants have

been sexually used by the masters even though they are not labeled as sex workers. T. R. Harshan, in his article “Kapadasadhacharithinte Kavalalukalum Nalini Jameelayum” (The keepers of false morality and Nalini Jameela) criticizes the sophisticated society of Kerala that uses the sex workers in the night and accuses them in the daylight (Harshan, np).

Though Nalini Jameela and her autobiography have been facing opinions that supports and oppose her, it has opened up a way for many underprivileged women to write about their lives against the patriarchal world view. Hers is a bold attempt to speak out the role of the society in making a woman a prostitute and also keeping them silent, and unrepresented. While boldly declaring prostitution as her profession Jameela uses the power of her body and womanhood, with which the mainstream society controls and subjugates a woman, as a weapon to 'counter power.'

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“Colonial Masters and Postcolonial Slaves”: A Study of Power Manipulatory Syndrome in Rohinton Mistry's *A Fine Balance*

Abstract

*Colonialism is the imperial structure of power. This power in course of time creates masters. The powerful masters suppress the society at the microcosmic and macrocosmic levels. The people living in the margins are crushed by power. This suppression is often developed or imposed by money, race, class, discourse and rank. This paper brings out the truth of such suppressions as elucidated from the novel *A Fine Balance* by Rohinton Mistry. In the post colonial societies like India, slaves are crushed by the merciless and cruel functioning of the ruthless masters. Mistry is the author of three novels – *Such a Long Journey* (1991), *A Fine Balance* (1995) and *The Family Matters* (2002). He has provided a detailed account about the post-independence Indian society. In all these three novels, he portrays Indian history with fictional accounts. *A Fine Balance* is set during Indira Gandhi's imposition of Emergency in 1975-1977.*

*Rohinton Mistry has portrayed the suppression at microcosmic and macrocosmic levels of society. Microcosm is the domestic life and macrocosm is the society. At the microcosmic level, in domestic life, there is a fight between Nusswan (*The Superior*) and his sister, Dina Dalal and Mrs. Shroff (*The Inferiors*). Though the feud is between the brother and sister, the ordinary domestic problem transcends the barriers. Nusswan is psychopathic when he treats his sister harshly and mercilessly. He indulges in physical molestation. At the macrocosmic phase of society, Beggarmaster suppresses the marginals Omprakash and Ishvar. Pandit Lalluram, the higher caste man suppresses the Chammars, the lower caste. Political suppression by the Prime Minister on the people is executed through Thakur Dharamsi, Navalkar and Sergeant Kesar.*

The novel revolves around the power structure in India. All the characters undergo sufferings. They are being humiliated. They struggle due to the cyclic process of power. This struggle is created by the manipulation of power. This paper interprets analyses and decodes the 'sacred' nature of power which works through the machinery of democracy.

Colonialism is as old as the origin of human race. It is the inherent tendency of human beings to dominate the weaker sections or classes of society. Since the dawn of Greek and Roman civilizations in the West, the conquerors tended to invade, conquer and colonise the alien countries. The conqueror colonized the conquered countries. Such colonized countries and people were treated as the 'Other' in the colonial discourse. Due to the maritime trade in the 17th century, the European countries such as Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, Denmark and Holland sailed away from Europe and colonized the countries in the New World (America), Africa and Asia. The Westerners always imagined themselves as the

'civiliser', who explored the interior regions, colonized them and made efforts to 'civilise' them. This kind of imperial attitude is an attempt at the suppression and oppression of the 'natives'. At times, these were sporadic outbursts of protests against the white supremacy and hegemony. The white rulers had the gumption to outwit the struggle of the colonized people. It was always different to face the stiff opposition of the natives. So the cunning and surreptitious whites invented the colonial discourse, which furtively keeps the colonized under control. The power manipulatory syndrome is a part of grand power narrative of the colonial rulers. The white rulers are no more in the postcolonial societies, like India. However, the power manipulatory syndrome is unfailingly hidden in the psyche of the rulers. Lord Acton said, "Power corrupts Absolute power corrupts absolutely" (Letter). Power contains the insidious nature of corruption, which is both internal and external. Rohinton Mistry's novel *A Fine Balance* deftly portrays the play of power discourse in India during the Emergency period.

In the postcolonial societies like India, freedom has been legally the right to all men. However, there is discrimination in the treatment of the citizens in all spheres of life such as religion, academia and administration. Rohinton Mistry has penned three novels – *Such a Long Journey* (1991), *A Fine Balance* (1995), and *The Family Matters* (2002), in which he has provided a detailed account about the post-independence Indian society. In all these three novels, he portrays the modern especially post-independence scenario. His novel *A Fine Balance* is set during Indira Gandhi's imposition of Emergency in 1975-1977.

All the major characters in his novels undergo emotional and physical violence with innumerable sufferings. They are humiliated extremely. Their struggle is often created by the manipulation of power. Power is a key factor in his novels. In *A Fine Balance*, the prime characters such as Dina Dalal, Maneck, Omprakash and Ishvar suffer by the societal and political powers. The novel centers around the power structure in India as it deals with the fight between the minority and majority and higher caste and the lower caste people. Power is immanent and omnipresent as it functions at macrocosmic and microcosmic levels of society.

At the microcosmic level, in domestic life, there is a discord between Nusswan (The Superior) and his sister, Dina Dalal and Mrs. Shroff (The Inferiors). Though the feud is between the brother and sister, the ordinary domestic problem transcends the barriers. Nusswan is psychopathic when he treats his sister harshly and mercilessly. He indulges in physical molestation. At the macrocosmic phase of society, Beggarmaster suppresses Omprakash and Ishvar. Pandit Lalluram, the higher caste man suppresses the Chammar, the lower caste. Political suppression by the Prime Minister on the people is executed through Thakur Dharamsi, Navalkar and Sergeant Kesar.

Michel Foucault is the modern theorist on power and manipulation. According to him, "... power and knowledge directly imply one another" (Pylypa 23). This power is discursive and not coercive. The power that he speaks of is not power of violence, but the power that changes the will. Rohinton Mistry voices against discriminations gendered by power. Dina Dalal is the daughter of Dr. Shroff and Mrs. Shroff. Nusswan, her brother, took the family's responsibilities after her father's death. Dina is forced to do household works. She is almost treated as a slave. "His clothes were the most frequent cause of Dina's punishment. After washing, ironing, and folding them, she had to stack four separate piles in cupboard: white trousers Despite the beatings, she never tired of provoking him" (FB 22). Due to her

heavy household works, she could not study well. Nusswan said that he was going to stop her from school. She complained to her grandfather since her mother became voiceless. Her effort brought little results.

Dina wanted to cut her hair short. Nusswan refused to permit her. He told her that he couldn't afford her haircut. Moreover, she is a Parsi girl and should not cut her hair short. As days passed, she trimmed her hair with the help of Zenobia, her school friend. In the evening Nusswan took a black electrical tape and joined the plait in her head. She had to go to school with the plait. There were continuous beatings and scolding. Nusswan is almost psychopathic in his treatment of sister.

“Shivering, she stared defiantly at him, her nipples stiffening. He pinched one, hard and she flinched. “Look at you with your little breasts starting to grow. You think you are a woman already. I should cut them right off, . . . He was eying her strangely, and she grew afraid. She understood that her sharp answers were enraging him . . . he was staring at the new fledged bloom of hair where her legs met” (24).

Three years passed since the death of her father. Nusswan married a girl named Ruby. Ruby and Dina were fighting often. A day passed rarely without fighting. Dina went to libraries, whenever she found time. She found relief from her problems in listening to music. She noticed a young man coming to the concert hall regularly. She falls in love with him, Rustom. Both met each other and got married. On their third wedding anniversary Rustom met with an accident and died. She did not want to go to her brother's home after the death of her husband. She knew that she would be treated as a servant if she would go. She started tailoring business with two tailors. It was the time of Emergency. Omprakash and Ishvar were the two tailors who worked for Dina. Ishvar asked Dina what Emergency was. She said, “Government problems played by people in power” (75). The tailors were late a day before the due date. Dina questioned them why they could not turn up early even during Emergency when the tailors would be on time. Ishvar said, “if government kept their promises, that gods would come down to garland them” (78). Althusser says, “Democracy makes us feel that we are choosing the kind of government we have, but in practice the differences between political parties, once in power, are fewer than the rhetorical gulfs between them” (Barry 158).

In Marxist ideology, 'Interpellation' is a process by which an “individual is encouraged to see himself or herself as an. . . independent” (158). But in reality he has to undergo a lot of sufferings. The situation always precedes the individuals. The individual's identities become subservient to the situations. In *A Fine Balance* the Emergency and the Prime Minister are the agents of situation. They in turn whipped the helpless individuals in the country. She said that it was only for crooks and black marketeers and not for ordinary people. She spoke, “it will make things better for ordinary people. Only crooks, the smugglers, the black marketeers need to worry. . . . I began introducing programmes of benefit for the common man and woman” (FB 263). The Prime Minister's insidious statement victimized the plebeians such as Dina, Om, Ishvar, Maneck, Avinash and Ashraf. They became helpless cogs in the wheel of government machinery which bothered them cruelly and mercilessly beyond imagination.

Police were given the right to use their power as they wished. They caught Om and Ishvar when they went to the market. Common men and women were also captured. Ashraf was

beaten severely. They were loaded into garage trucks. Om and Ishvar were beaten when they demanded explanation. They, along with other common men, were taken to the sterilization camp. They screamed there in pain and panic. Prime Minister said, "Birth control will be available to everyone"(263). The word 'available' is ironic, as it meant 'forced'. All men and women who were taken to the camp were forced to undergo the operation. People resisted and doctors asked them not to resist that the knife might harm them as, "the warning frightened them into silent submission" (521). Though the Prime Minister assured freedom to ordinary people during Emergency, they were suppressed by power mongers.

According to Foucault, "...knowledge is inseparable from power" (Pylypa 23). The discourse of politics produces a new form of knowledge. This knowledge is not neutral. It creates a false belief that discrimination is normal in society as, "... power and knowledge directly imply one another that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of the field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relation" (23).

Dukhi Mochi, Roopa and other Chammar gained knowledge about their community that they were the suppressed clans. Narayan and Ishvar were the two sons of Dukhi Mochi. When they entered a school, the slates fascinated them. They took them and started scribbling. The classrooms were empty as the students went for practice. They failed to notice the arrival of the teacher as they were excited in scribbling. The teacher punished them with dozen blows on their buttocks for entering inside the school. Chammar were not allowed inside the institution. They left the place immediately after the punishment. Dukhi took his sons to Pandit Lalluram for justification. Pandit, the Brahmin, was the landlord of the village. All types of disputes were taken to him from the village. Pandit told Dukhi since he was a hardworking man and he should not cross limit. He asked him to understand the four Varnas of the society: Brahmin, Kshatria, Vaishya, and Shudra. Dukhi was convinced by his words. Pandit said, "Your children entered the classroom. They polluted the place. They touched instruments of learning. They defiled slates and chalks, which upper caste children would touch. You are lucky there was not a holy book like the Bhagavad Gita in that cupboard, no sacred texts. Or the punishment would have been more final" (FB 113). Dukhi thanked Pandit Lalluram for spending his precious time. The powerful higher caste suppressed the lower caste. Sita was a Chammar caste woman. She was beaten severely for walking on the street of upper caste. Lead was poured into the ears of Gambhir, Dukhi's friend, for overhearing the prayer in the temple.

Dukhi's grandson, Om and his uncle Ishvar went to the city for tailoring job. They hired a home in the slum area. Rajaram was their neighbour who was a hair collector. He described to them about the job of collecting hair. He accused the Brahmins, who did not allow the middle men, like Rajaram, to collect hair. They conducted an auction for every three months. Ishvar said, "You don't have to tell us about Brahmins and priests," . . . "The greed of the upper castes is well known in our village". "It is the same everywhere", agreed Rajaram" (174).

Foucault speaks of the omnipresence of power. He says, "Power is everywhere . . . it comes from everywhere" (Loomba 41). Power exists at the micro and macro levels of society. Trouble is everywhere and so is power. Both co-exist in the society. Power is not only exercised by politicians, land lords, higher castes, but also by a watchman at micro level.

Roopa, mother of Narayan and Ishvar struggled to bring up her sons. Her family

struggled in starvation. Being persecuted by starvation she was tempted to steal. Though it was immoral, she continued doing it. As her sons grew up and started eating she went to a grove to pluck oranges at night. She plucked as much as she wanted. She was startled on seeing the watchman, who asked her to pluck a little more if she wanted. She said that she plucked enough. When she was about to leave, he stopped her and threatened her. She said, “I only have to shout, and the owner and his sons would be here at once. They would strip you and whip you for stealing” (FB 98). Her shaking hand dropped the oranges. He came near and asked for something in return. She said she had nothing to give. He started at her blouse and slid into it. He raped her.

The lower caste exploitation continued. Thakur Dharamsi exploited people politically, as the higher caste ill-treated the lower caste. During the time of election, Thakur took charge as usual. The lower caste people were not allowed to poll their vote. They were simply asked to put their fingerprint and go. When Narayan's turn came he protested. He said that he wanted to sign his full name. Thakur Dharamsi identified Narayan that he was the son of Dukhi. He ordered his goondas to take him along with the other two protests. They were taken and bound in a tree. They were beaten black and blue. “. . . burning coals were held to the three men's genitals, then stuffed into their mouths” (146). After the ballot boxes were taken away, they were hanged. On the next day, Narayan's corpse was even refused proper cremation. The whole family was burnt to death with their house. Om and Ishvar complained to the police. When the police came for investigation, it was designed as an accident. They stopped the investigation stating that there was lack of evidence.

In the democratic system of India, voting is the basic right of a democratic man. Ishvar's family was totally destroyed by political power. Their basic right was denied. They underwent a lot of sufferings in their village to assert their rights. Althusser has given a clear distinction between 'state power and state control'. State power is maintained by law courts, prisons and the army. Althusser terms it as “repressive structure” (Barry 158). They are external forces. The power of the state is maintained by internal forces also like schools, media, churches and the families. It is an 'ideology'. Both internal and external forces exploit the society.

Through the powerful tools of discourse, the higher caste men were able to exercise power over the lower caste. “. . . power in society, retain their power over the marginal and subordinates through the creation and control of particular discourse” (Nayar 36). The higher caste men tried to subjugate lower caste men by creating the subterranean current of consciousness which makes them think that they were 'Others' or 'Untouchables'. The power of the higher castes works through language, culture and institutions. They made the lower caste believe that they were irrational. Edward Said studied colonialism through the concept of 'Orientalism'. “Orientalism is the European construction of east as primitive, savage, pagan, undeveloped and criminal. Such a construction that enabled the Europeans to justify his presence: the poor, weak native needed to be governed and developed” (160). The upper caste men like Europeans treated the lower caste as criminal and undeveloped. Dukhi Mochi in *A Fine Balance* acts like the colonized whereas Thakur acts as the colonizer. He was grounding the red chilies into powder in Thakur's home. The mortar was broken when he was grounding. It fell on his foot and he was wounded. Thakur accused him that Dukhi broke the mortar. He was even denied the day's coolie. He returned home. “Angry and humiliated, he sat silent in the hut all evening. Ishvar and Narayan were frightened” (FB 105). They became

speechless for few days. Inability to speak against the dominant caste man is a kind of silent behavior of accepting reality.

Power and money act as the coercive tools that manipulate the society. Emergency symbolizes power. The power changes everything. "with the Emergency, everything upside down. Black can be made white, day turned into night. . . . a little cash, sending people to jail is very easy" (295). People felt sick of Emergency. Though they felt frustrated, they could not voice against it. Europeans were the colonial masters. They subjugated nearly half of the world. It is obvious that colonialism declined after the Second World War. But the remnants of colonialism are still retained as neo-colonialism. The dying embers of the dead colonialism are still retained after independence of all colonized countries, like India. In the post-independence scenario, the new rulers assume themselves as Angres Bashahs and treat the other people of their country as 'marginal'.

The Prime Minister in *A Fine Balance* acted as the colonial master in the country. Many more common men also acted as the representatives of the people like the Beggarmaster, Thakur Dharamsi and Pandit Lalluram and so on. Dina, Omprakash, Ishvar, Avinash, Maneck and other marginalized people are like slaves in the postcolonial nations. Nusswan, Beggarmaster and the Prime Minister are the symbols of neo-colonizers, who continue to suppress their kith and kin, relatives and citizens. They treat the other people as marginal. The postcolonial slaves in *A Fine Balance* are Omprakash, Ishvar, Maneck and Dina. They have been victimized by the ruthless and merciless treatment of their family, village and of course country. Masterhood and slavery are the outward manifestations of power discourse. Power manipulation is strongly exhibited through the oppressors in the postcolonial society. Individuals are assigned power by the situational shifts.

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Power Politics in Slave Narratives: Experience of Slavery in Jacob's and Douglass' Narratives

Abstract

Slave narratives form a significant part of literature as it presents the recovery of a race from the state of being a commodity to independent individuals. Their journey was an extremely hard one and inspiring too. Through my paper I intend to analyze the difference of the experience of slavery in a male and female narrative. For that I have selected two famous and authentic slave narratives namely Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl and Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass by Harriet Jacobs and Frederick Douglass respectively. Both the authors had firsthand experience of slavery and there are many variables which connect as well as contrast their life. Slaves belonged to a class of people whose normal human rights were denied. But even in such a scenario it is quite interesting to note that a woman slave experienced slavery in a dual aspect. As seen in any patriarchal setup women were more encroached by this machine of slavery. They were made to toil like male slaves and as an added torture were subjected to the sexual perversions of their masters. While it was somehow possible for a man slave to run away to free Northern states it was really hard for a female slave to do so. She was denied safety even in the so called secure setup of a family. Though slave marriages took place a man had only secondary power over his wife. Female slaves were only answerable to their masters and often lived under the threat that their husbands could be sold to another master. And when it came to the case of children born to a female slave their possession automatically went to the master. He could sell or do anything as he pleased with the child. These entire scenarios are well portrayed in the selected texts and the difference of the same institution on female and male psyche is very evident. How hesitant is a female to acknowledge the torture she had been subjected to and how proudly a man declares his journey to independence shows the difference of their experiences. The shame a woman feels to acknowledge her situation well proves the point that power had different influences on their sensitivities. How slavery becomes a personal demon for the female narrative and more of a social demon in a male narrative can be well proved by analyzing these narratives.

Slave narratives form a significant part of literature as it presents the recovery of a race from the state of being a commodity to independent individuals. Their journey was an extremely hard and inspiring one. Through my paper I intend to analyze the difference of the experience of slavery in a male and female narrative. For that I have selected two famous and authentic slave narratives namely *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* and *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* by Harriet Jacobs and Frederick Douglass respectively. Both the authors had firsthand experience of slavery and there are many variables which connect as well as contrast their life. Slaves belonged to a class of people whose normal human rights were denied. But even in such a scenario it is quite interesting to note that a woman slave

experienced slavery in a dual aspect. As seen in any patriarchal setup women were more encroached by this machine of slavery. They were made to toil like male slaves and as an added torture were also subjected to the sexual perversions of their masters.

For a bondman it was somehow possible to run away to free Northern states but it was really hard for a female slave to do so. She was denied safety even in the so called secure setup of a family. Though slave marriages took place a man had only secondary power over his wife. Female slaves were only answerable to their masters and often lived under the threat that their husbands could be sold to another master. And when it came to the case of children born to a female slave their possession automatically went to the master. He could sell or do anything as he pleased with the child. These entire scenarios are well captured in the selected texts and the difference of the same institution on female and male psyche is very evident. How hesitant is a female to acknowledge the torture she had been subjected to and how proudly a man declares his journey to independence shows the difference of their experiences.

Harriet Jacobs's *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861) particularly attracted my attention since her personal history differed greatly from *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave. Written by Himself* (1845), which has traditionally been considered as one of the greatest slave narrative. In *Incidents*, Jacobs discloses aspects that were specific of female slaves' experiences, aspects that were unveiled in most narratives of bondage by male authors. Jacobs managed to adapt to the conventions of slave narratives as written by men in order to elaborate a unique personal history of bondage, a history of female bondage written from a woman's perspective. It is interesting to note the differences in the roles that slave men and women played on the plantation. This analysis of slave life will also focus on the relationship between slave holders and slaves, especially between masters and bondwomen. Jacobs constructed *Incidents* around topics like sexual harassment, rape, and appropriation of sexuality, which, as stated above, were confined to slave women alone.

When slave women attempted to publish their personal histories, the literary pattern used to narrate the experiences of former slave men were found inept to meet their narrative expectations, and these women would therefore have to adapt it to relate their unique experiences as female slaves. These women found it hard to express appropriately the experiences in their personal histories due to the sexist and racist attitudes of the time, and consequently relied on other black and white, male and female authors to narrate their experiences in bondage. It is in this context that Harriet Jacobs emerges as the first African American women to put into writing the experiences of a female slave providing a first-hand account of her sufferings in the first person.

Harriet Jacobs, like many authors of slave narratives had done before, signals a turning point in her career as a slave and this turning point is completely different from that of a male slave. When slave men consider a turning point in their lives a particular fight with a white master or overseer that gives them the determination to obtain their freedom, Jacobs's turning point is determined by her "sexual maturity" (Jacqueline Jones 32). Instead of realizing the need for things to change through an external and physical action, the turning point in her slave life is the moment when she reaches sexual maturity and realizes the implications of being a slave and a woman in nineteenth-century southern America. Jacobs describes as follows the moment she realized her life had changed: "I now entered on my fifteenth year—a sad epoch in the life of a slave girl. My master began to whisper foul words in my

ear” (*Incidents* 44). With this statement, Harriet Jacobs does not simply identify her sexual maturity as the turning point in her life as a slave woman, but further states that this is a common experience to all female slaves.

Although Frederick Douglass refers to the situation of slave *boys*, he records no visible distinction between female or male slave children on the plantation. Their duties were exactly the same and they did not depend on the slaves' sex but on their age. Slaves were, as a rule, considered children until they were twelve and, until they were around eight years of age, these slave children lived a joyful life, free of the worries that assailed adult slaves. In *Narrative*, Douglass explains what his master said to his wife when he discovered that she had taught Douglass the A, B, C: “[I]f you teach that nigger (speaking of myself) how to read, there would be no keeping him. It would forever unfit him to be a slave. He would at once become unmanageable, and of no value to his master” (78).

Jacobs's first mistress teaches her to read and write, and, like many slaves, Jacobs uses her literacy as a means of empowerment and resistance. She does not, however, write false passes with which to escape to free land like other male slaves. Instead, she writes false letters to Dr. Flint during her concealment in her grandmother's garret to misguide him in his pursuit of her. According to Charles J. Heglar, literacy had different effects in the hands of male and female slaves. To quote him “Whereas Douglass' literacy allows him to reach a psychological freedom within the constraints of slavery before his eventual escape to the North, Jacobs' literacy allows her to write letters that convince Dr. Flint that she is in the North when she is actually hidden in her free grandmother's Southern home” (23). As a female slave, literacy became an effective means to trick the master, to gain some power over the enslaver, and eventually, to obtain freedom.

Slave women were, from their teens, prone to be sexually abused by their masters. In this way, their owners, who possessed the product of their labor, became also proprietors of these women's sexuality. This domination of the slave's sexuality was an extension of the white men's domination over the slaves' whole life. As Angela Davis explains, “the right claimed by slave owners and their agents over the bodies of female slaves was a direct expression of their presumed property rights over Black people as a whole. The license to rape emanated from and facilitated the ruthless economic domination that was the gruesome hallmark of slavery” (175). Another argument used by proslavery agents to justify these sexual abuses was based on the myth of Jezebel, the myth of the lewdly sensuous enslaved black women, “the counter image of the mid-nineteenth-century ideal of the Victorian lady. She did not lead men and children to God; piety was foreign to her” (Deborah Grey White 29). White men created this stereotype of lewd and promiscuous black woman to escape the blame for the sexual abuses committed on female slaves.

Denigrated by the white men, who justified their base deeds, and without the help or understanding of the mistress, the female slave was in a difficult position. If a house servant, she would have to spend longer hours in the Big House near her abuser, and thus her chances of being sexually abused by her master and physically or psychologically tortured by her mistress increased; if a field hand, most of her time would be devoted to physically hard chores, but sexual abuses were also inescapable. White men tempted them with a comfortable life in exchange for sexual favors. Some women accepted to become concubines, but others demonstrated to be strongly principled and rejected selling their bodies for a more comfortable life. Some slave women, unable to make a decision coherent

with their moral values, resorted to escape or even suicide. Others justified their decision arguing that slave women had a different moral, and that “amongst the slave population no safeguard is thrown around virtue, and no inducement held out to slave women to be chaste” (William Wells Brown 2).

In case of bondmen fighting masters and overseers was a very courageous and risky thing to do but, at the same time, it was an act that made the slaveholder aware that he had to be careful with that slave. This fight was a *turning point* in the life of a slave, as Frederick Douglass would claim in his *Narrative*:

This battle with Mr. Covey was the turning-point in my career as a slave. It rekindled the few expiring embers of freedom, and revived within me a sense of my own manhood. It recalled the departed self-confidence, and inspired me again with a determination to be free. The gratification afforded by the triumph was a full compensation for whatever else might follow, even death itself. He only can understand the deep satisfaction which I experienced, who has himself repelled by force the bloody arm of slavery. I felt as I never felt before. It was a glorious resurrection, from the tomb of slavery, to the heaven of freedom (65).

The methods of resistance used by slave men and slave women were different. Male slaves were more ready to fight physically for their *rights*, to run the risk of escaping, attacking, killing or conspiring to revolt. Women resorted to their wit and to language, and stood as mere spectators when their children were born to slavery. All these methods used by slaves as a reaction against slavery and the enslavers were included in their personal histories of bondage, for, as stated above, they were very important episodes in their lives in which bondmen and women asserted their determination to fight against the slavery system, and slave narratives were, after all, antislavery writings.

Female slaves found it really hard to use their own voice to relate their hardships in the first person: as black slaves, they were denied the right to education; as females, they had to perform a domestic (rather than public) role in society. If it was difficult for black men especially for ex slaves, since they were in constant fear of being recaptured into slavery to write and publish their works, it was even more difficult for black women especially former bondwomen due to the fact that they were supposed to adopt a domestic role. Thus, female ex slaves had to rely on the good will and oratory abilities of white abolitionists and male African American speakers and preachers, the only people who could present their sufferings in public pro-abolition meetings. Consequently, the personal voice of female slaves would remain unheard for decades until the publication of the first writings by ex slave women.

The idea of community, especially the community formed by other female slaves in the family is of great relevance for the female slave. Women are, therefore, those who make family bonds stronger, especially in a context in which they are at great risk, as was the case in slavery times. Jacobs' grandmother aids her throughout her journey into freedom. She provides Jacobs with a hiding-place from which she will finally enact her escape to North. Thus, when Jacobs tells her grandmother about her plans to escape to the northern states, she uses Jacobs's children to convince her to stay. Jacobs's grandmother's words are quoted in *Incidents*: “Linda, do you want to kill your old grandmother? Do you mean to leave your little, helpless children? I am old now, and cannot do for your babies as I once did for you” (139). Jacobs, however, justifies her willingness to escape arguing, precisely, that she does it

for her family: “I replied that if I went away, perhaps their father would be able to secure their freedom” (139). Jacobs's grandmother insists on the importance of family relations and argues that her good reputation among the slave community will diminish if she abandons her children.

In any case, women slaves prove to have a more responsible attitude towards parenthood than male slaves. For some slave women, motherhood is a deterrent to escape. They do not want to become free and leave their children under the yoke of slavery. In contrast, male slaves usually write about their own freedom as a tool for the achievement of their relatives' release from bondage. Male slave narrators justify their leaving their beloved ones behind arguing that, in order to successfully fight for the liberation of their family, their individual freedom must be achieved first. Women, on the other hand, feel the need to stay with their children. Thus, Carole Boyce Davies affirms “the mark of motherhood is often ascribed to women's inability to travel” (135). For the slave woman, freedom means freedom for her and her children. Therefore, to the normal difficulties encountered by male slaves to escape, the slave mother would have to add the *burden* of her children.

Jacobs's escape is described “as a progression from one small space to another” (Valerie Smith, “Loopholes” 215). Instead of finding references to open spaces, nature, and the north star, which were common in male slave narratives, Jacobs describes the different hiding-places in which she has to take refuge in order to reach free land. Concealment is, thus, felt as a kind of emancipation that provides her with a peculiar form of freedom. This escape does not separate her from her children, but rather allows her to see them on a daily basis: Harriet Jacobs “escapes but remains in confinement in the attic of her grandmother's house so that she can watch, voyeur-like, her children” (Davies 134). She cannot leave her children, but the situation on the plantation is unsustainable. Consequently, the concealment in her grandmother's garret becomes the ideal solution to the problem: on the one hand, Jacobs escapes from her master's sexual advances; and on the other, she does not abandon her children but can see them grow.

The greatest act of vengeance against all these agents was, for both male and female ex slaves, the act of writing their autobiographies and thus giving voice to the oppression they endured. Slave narratives support the belief that black men and women held in bondage should have a different set of moral values from those professed by white people. Nevertheless, Jacobs wants to justify her loss of virtue to her audience because at the time of publication of narratives she was a free woman and wanted to be considered as an equal member of the American society. She wants to state that it was slavery which took away her innocence and people who were always protected in their life may not understand her plight. To quote her, “ But, O, ye happy women, whose purity has been sheltered from childhood, who have been free to choose the objects of your affection, whose homes are protected by law, do not judge the poor desolate slave girl too severely!” (154).

Whereas the male narrator relates cruelties common to all slaves, his heroic acts of resistance, and his courageous escape, without leaving room for the expression of feelings, the female slave narrator discloses her intimacies, her emotions and, in a nutshell, her most private self, in her book. It was an emotional as well as physical journey for female slaves. Though a female slave is unfit to be measured under the yardsticks of 'virtuous' heroines, her spirit for freedom for herself and her children uplifts her position to a much more elevated status. Jacobs makes it clear to her readers that her Autobiography belongs to a different

genre when she says, "Reader, my story ends with freedom; not in the usual way, with marriage. I and my children are now free! We are as free from the power of slave holders as are the white people of the north; and though that, according to my ideas, is not saying a great deal, it is a vast improvement in my condition" (302). Thus the few female slave narratives available helps us to listen to that silenced voice of a woman slave and her conception of the system of slavery.

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Food as the Wellspring of Love and Power in Laura Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate*

Abstract

Like various other every day cultural artefacts, now food has also facilitated a dominant role in producing cultural discourses. The changes in socio-political, economic and other fields of human intervention instigated radical advancement in the pattern of food production, consumption, and distribution often leading to the emergence of culinary literatures in the process. Each culture, with its own tradition of literature, also maintains its own distinct cuisine and distinct traditional rules that govern acts of eating. Furthermore, each community that gives rise to a distinct literature necessarily also maintains culturally specific rules governing foods that are especially valued and foods that are especially shunned and controlling the contexts in which particular foods may or may not be eaten. Recent trends in food studies have opened new avenues in literary studies to examine how the use of food imagery and metaphor represents complex ideas and deeper meanings in literature. Literary food studies analyze food symbolism to reflect on cultural identity which includes various issues from social position to sexual desire to gender relations and our ideological positions too. The global postmodern culture and world food market have stimulated new questions regarding foods as an important part of cultural study, encouraging the recent growth in food studies. In literature, food may represent many different things, such as power or social status, religion, family or relationships, gender, sexuality, wealth, and group identity. Like Water for Chocolate: A Novel in Monthly Instalments, with Recipes, Romances, and Home Remedies, as its full title suggests, is a crossbreed work, combining the elements of a historical novel set during the turbulent times of the Mexican Revolution, the mystical and healing art of food that Esquivel learned in her grandmother's kitchen, and a highly romantic love story. The story unfolds through the twelve divisions of the novel, one chapter for each month of the year, beginning with January and ending with December, with one recipe per chapter, each recipe in some way relevant to the events that will occur in that chapter. Esquivel believes in the power of food and the power of the emotions with which people create the magic, the alchemy, of the kitchen. This paper attempts to explore how food helps in framing power relations between individuals as well as society based on Laura Esquivel's novel.

“...One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well” (Woolf 23).

Food is commonly used in literature as a metaphor because it is a familiar, universal substance that is recognizable and understandable when used as representation. Food is naturally rich with symbolism, and has been so since ancient times, because of its centrality to life. Foods provide an instant, strong visual image when used in language, and in different cultures, various foods may carry different connotations that create instant mental connections when referenced. Food related language uses these associations by providing concrete wording to describe experiences, events, people, and emotions, often abstract ideas

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that seem to be completely unrelated to food itself. In literature, food may represent many different things, such as power or social status, religion, family or relationships, gender, sexuality, wealth, and group identity. In the world of fiction, they are a reminder of the material world; they can also serve to remind us of the history (and presence) of exploitation.

Using imagery of food and eating to represent really complex ideas is not a new device. Throughout history, food has functioned as metaphor in some of our most ancient texts. In fiction, the usage of food is more than just a literary detail that provides readers with a realistic visual image. By questioning what, how, and how much a character eats, as well as how food is prepared, shared, served, avoided, or even bottled and preserved, literary scholars can gain a deeper perspective into a character's ethnicity, status, gender, and all parts of their cultural and personal identity.

Controlling one's diet and restricting intake can be a direct parallel of the efforts to control other aspects of one's life and often comprises an entire ideology of consumption, a regimen or lifestyle that is a direct expression of one's values and world view. How we eat, what we eat, and with whom we eat are the most fundamental reflections of who we are physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

Over time, various discourses of food have developed. Patricia Wells, an international columnist, says the postmodern cuisine is “comma cuisine”, pointing to the commas distinguishing the miscellaneous ingredients found on many restaurant menus. “[Thus] the traditional categories of cultural life become blurred, the edges indistinct... In this cultural climate, the concept of the individual person begins to lose its integrity... Portrayals of the self multiply, the lines grow increasingly complex, and with this mounting complexity the boundaries grow fuzzy” (118-19). As a result, our selections of food are more complex than simply whether we order soft drinks with dinner or eat a salad instead of a sandwich. It is through our processes of sharing or discussing food that we can view it as a form of discourse. Much of our notions about food, and its relationship to the natural world, are conveyed and learned through the sharing of narratives and stories. In this sense, we could argue that food serves as a socializing mechanism by which we come to understand our cultures, our societies, and the groups to which we belong. While this aspect occurs on a small scale, discourses about food also are prevalent within larger social structures such as government, media, and popular culture. Often, these discourses come into conflict with each other because they offer myriad perspectives about food and issues related to it.

Food is intimately bound up discourses of power. Carole M. Counihan relates the notion of power with food ways in two different ways:

First, there is the power that society allocates or denies to men and women through their access to and control of one essential resource: food. Men's and women's ability to produce, provide, distribute and consume food is a key measure of their power. This ability varies according to their culture, their class, and their family organization, and the overall economic structure of their society (1-2).

Then he extends the power and food metaphor to the society by saying that:

The second meaning of power we examine is personal power: whether men's and women's relationship to food and its meanings contributes to a valued sense of self. Men's and women's attitudes about their bodies, the

legitimacy of their appetites, and the importance of their food work reveal whether their self-concept is validating or denigrating. We are concerned with how their relationship to food may facilitate gender complementarity and mutual respect or produce gender hierarchy (2).

There are innumerable ways in which food and power are linked. *Like Water for Chocolate: A Novel in Monthly Installments, with Recipes, Romances, and Home Remedies*, as its full title suggests, is a fusion work, combining the elements of the turbulent times of the Mexican Revolution, the healing art of food that Laura Esquivel learned in her grandmother's kitchen, and a highly romantic love story. The story unfolds through the twelve divisions of the novel, one chapter for each month of the year, beginning with January and ending with December, with one recipe per chapter, each recipe in some way relevant to the events that will occur in that chapter. After the list of ingredients, the narrative begins with instructions for the preparation of that month's recipe.

The novel can be viewed as the stories of two women, Tita De La Garza and her mother, the formidable Mama Elena. The course of their tussle against one another is the axis around which the entire novel runs. Tita strives for love, freedom, and individuality while Mama Elena stands as the prime opposition to the fulfillment of these goals. This mother-daughter relationship is fraught with difficulty from its inception, when Tita is brought into the world prematurely after her father's sudden death. The onion-induced weeping of Mama Elena is the source for Tita's premature birth. Tita was born into the world, in the kitchen, crying, amidst a flood of her mother's tears. "Tita was literally washed into this world on a great tide of tears that spilled over the edge of the table and flooded across the kitchen floor. Thanks to her unusual birth, Tita felt a deep love for the kitchen, where she spent most of her life from the day she was born" (Esquivel 10).

She develops a relationship with food that gives her the power to nurture and give vent to her emotions. When her mother was unable to produce milk due to the shock at the recent death of her husband, Mama accordingly hands off Tita to the house cook, Nacha, who nurtures the child in the kitchen. Surrounded by the colors, fragrance, and routines of Nacha's kitchen, Tita grows up understanding the world in terms of food. She enjoys her isolation in the domain of the kitchen.

Likewise for Tita the joy of living was wrapped up in the delights of food. It wasn't easy for a person whose knowledge of life was based on the kitchen to comprehend the outside world. That world was an endless expanse that began at the door between the kitchen and the rest of the house, whereas everything on the kitchen side of that door, on through the door leading to the patio and the kitchen and herb gardens was completely hers—it was Tita's realm (11).

Tita developed a diverse outlook on life unlike her sisters, Gertrudis and Rosaura, from her isolated childhood in the kitchen and she comes to develop different ideals for herself as she matures. As a young woman, Tita rebels against the family tradition that confines her to a life without love. She relentlessly questions her mother's stand towards her. This refusal to accept an assigned and undesirable social role marks the beginning of Tita's path to self-assertion and freedom.

The overwhelming sense of cold that descends upon Tita after Pedro, her lover and

Rosaura getting engaged is an early instance of a theme that will figure prominently in the novel: an emotional state manifesting itself physically. She later transmits her passion for Pedro through cooking by saying “smells have the power to evoke the past, bringing back sounds and even other smells that have no match in the present”(12).

The wedding of Rosaura and Pedro marks the first instance when Tita exerts, albeit unknowingly, the power that food offers her. Afflicted by sadness, Tita pours her emotions into the food she prepares by means of her tears. Her tears induce ceaseless vomiting and a terrible sense of loss among the wedding guests. However, more than a mere echo of Tita's sorrow, these effects constitute a violent and amplified expression of emotion, as the cake inflicts actual pain. She subconsciously transforms the emotional violence she has suffered into an act of social violence.

The moment they took their first bite of the cake, everyone was flooded with a great wave of longing. Even Pedro, usually so proper, was having trouble holding back his tears. Mama Elena, who hadn't shed a single tear over her husband's death, was sobbing silently. But the weeping was just the first symptom of a strange intoxication-an acute attack of pain and frustration-that seized the guests and scattered them across the patio and the grounds and in the bathrooms, all of them wailing over lost love. Everyone there, every last person, fell under this spell, and not very many of them made it to the bathrooms in time those who didn't joined the collective vomiting that was going on all over the patio. Only one person escaped: the cake had no effect on Tita (39).

Having left immediately after eating a single piece of cake, Tita is the only person to escape the scourge. Mama Elena, was certain that Tita purposefully poisoned the wedding cake. But “Tita was never able to convince her that she had only added one extra ingredient to the cake, the tears she had shed while preparing it”(40). Later the death of Nacha leaves Tita alone and without a confidant in the domain of the De La Garza kitchen. “Tita was the last link in a chain of cooks who had been passing culinary secrets from generation to generation since ancient times, and she was considered the finest exponent of the marvelous art of cooking”(45-46).

Tita used her ability to control the power of food for the second time with a rose given to her secretly by Pedro. She prepares quail in rose petal sauce. The recipe is of pre-Hispanic origin, and it is through the voice of Nacha's ghost that the secrets about this recipe are transmitted. The meal makes a curious effect on Gertrudis, the second sister. “On her the food seemed to act as an aphrodisiac; she began to feel an intense heat pulsing through her limbs” (48-49).

When the meal is complete, Gertrudis goes to prepare a shower to rid her of the pink sweat and rose-scented aroma she emits. The force of her heat and passion, still strong from the aphrodisiacal meal, causes the water from the primitive ranch shower to evaporate on contact and eventually sets the structure on fire.

It was as if a strange alchemical process had dissolved her entire being in the rose petal sauce, in the tender flesh of the quails, in the wine, in every one of the meal's aromas. That was the way she entered Pedro's body, hot, voluptuous, perfumed, totally sensuous. With that meal it seemed they had

discovered a new system of communication, in which Tita was the transmitter, Pedro the receiver, and poor Gertrudis the medium, the conducting body through which the singular sexual message was passed (49).

Fleeing naked from the burning shower, Gertrudis is scooped up onto a galloping horse by a soldier in the revolutionary army, who was drawn to the area by her intoxicating scent. The soldier and Gertrudis ride off.

An unexpected joy comes to Tita with the birth of Roberto, the son of Pedro and Rosaura. Tita works feverishly to prepare a special baptism meal. Rosaura produces no milk and is thus unable to nurse her child. Tita eventually takes on the responsibility of nursing Roberto, at first with special teas that he rejects. Once she offers her breast to the child, Tita discovers that she is miraculously full with milk and is able to feed her nephew. Pedro discovers Tita secretly nursing Roberto and helps her to conceal this from the rest of the family, strengthening the illicit bond between the two even further.

The location and circumstance of this exchange are also of significance. It occurs in the kitchen while Tita is preparing the baptism meal. “She would invent new recipes, hoping to repair the connection that flowed between them through the food she prepared. Her finest recipes date from this period of suffering” (64).

The turbulence of the revolution disturbs the domestic space, and in robbing Tita of her pet birds, the soldiers not only strip her of the opportunity to nurture, but also steal symbols of freedom. Likewise the violent attack from Mama Elena finally raids Tita's spirit of its remaining sustenance, letting Mama Elena keep Tita under her control. Tita's subsequent withdrawal into mental oblivion and physical detachment suggest that her only way out of this broken world is madness.

Under the loving care of Dr. Brown, Tita slowly emerges from her traumatized inner shell. Throughout her stay at John's house, Tita remains silent. Nevertheless, a bond grows between her and John as they spend a great deal of time together. John shares with Tita a recipe for making matches, and with this recipe, he explains the theory that an inner fire burns in each person and describes the ways in which one must protect this fire.

At Dr. Brown's house, she is able to explore a new way of existing in the world, not circumscribed by the limits imposed by Mama Elena or by her role as nurturer. Appropriately enough, it is food that finally restores Tita to stability. Visiting from the De La Garza ranch, Chenchu brings her ox-tail soup. With one spoonful Tita instantly recalls the best time of her life, her youth in the kitchen with Nacha, where she enjoyed many foods and Nacha's love. Crying with Chenchu, Tita remembers and recounts the recipe for the soup--the first recipe she has been able to remember since her breakdown.

The death of Mama Elena frees Tita from her mother's wretched sentence, and her excitement about marrying John Brown is diverted only by the birth of Rosaura's second child, a girl, whom Tita names Esperanza. Tita is intimately involved in raising her niece, as Rosaura is bedridden due to a complicated delivery and unable to nurse. Esperanza is reared in the kitchen, just as Tita was, and fed with the same teas and gruels with which Nacha nurtured Tita. Rosaura is quite jealous at the closeness between Tita and the infant. One day she confirms Tita's fears: She announces her intention to follow family doctrine and prohibit Esperanza from marrying. This announcement, combined with Pedro's confrontational

efforts to dissuade Tita from marrying John Brown, inspires a terrible rage in Tita. It is with this rage that Tita prepares a meal called *champandongo*, to be served during John's visit to ask for her hand in marriage.

While cooking, Tita experiences a sensation of tremendous heat that compounds the heat of the kitchen to create an intense steam. Anger permeates her body, and everything surrounding her aggravates her. "Tita was literally 'like water for hot chocolate' – she was on the verge of boiling over" (138). The heat of Tita's anger rises until she is suddenly interrupted by the arrival of Chenchá, who has returned to the ranch happily married and ready to begin a new life.

Chenchá's return lets Tita take a break from cooking to prepare for John's arrival. She takes a shower in the outdoor bathroom. In the shower, Tita's rage subsides, and the heat slowly dissipates. However, the water suddenly becomes so hot that it burns Tita's skin. Fearing that the bathroom is once again on fire, Tita opens her eyes and sees that Pedro has been standing outside of the shower watching her intently, his eyes radiating lust. Tita flees the shower when Pedro approaches her.

After dinner, Tita is left to clean the kitchen. In a small room off the kitchen in which Mama Elena used to bathe, Pedro once again confronts Tita. Without any words, he takes her to a bed in the room and makes love to her, taking her virginity. Though Rosaura and Chenchá see the "phosphorescent plumes" and strange glow coming from the room, they refuse to go near, fearing that the commotion is the ghost of Mama Elena, bringing fury from the other side.

Tita fears that she has become pregnant as a result of her encounter with Pedro. She has missed a period and knows she will have to cancel her engagement to John Brown now that she is not a virgin. She is preoccupied with these thoughts during the preparation of King's Day bread. This particular recipe evokes memories of her childhood, especially the loving care of Nacha and companionship of the disappeared Gertrudis.

While Tita bakes the bread, Rosaura visits to ask for Tita's help. Rosaura suffers from digestive problems that make her overweight and give her bad breath and flatulence, estranging her even further from Pedro. John Brown has prescribed a diet to ease her discomfort, but Rosaura asks Tita for further assistance with her illness and her marriage. Tita agrees to help Rosaura, providing a special family recipe to cure bad breath and offering special foods to help her lose weight. She is simultaneously warmed by the good will that leads Rosaura to confide in her and desperately guilt-ridden about her encounter with Pedro, especially because Rosaura pinpoints the breakdown in her relationship with Pedro to the night she and Chenchá saw flames from the "ghost" of Mama Elena.

The final consummation of the passion between Tita and Pedro is both tragic and triumphant in that the light of Tita's inner fire is finally free to blaze, but only at the expense of her earthly life. It is perhaps only now that Tita's inner fire can truly burn, as she has, for the first time, made an active decision based on her desires, leaving behind the constricting confines of the cultural role into which she was forced throughout her life. Whereas Pedro goes toward the luminous tunnel uninitiated in the idea of the inner fire, Tita approaches with full knowledge that she is fulfilling her true desire. This divergence in their experience of their final erotic encounter contrasts with their previous affairs, in which Pedro was always the active, powerful subject, while Tita was the uninitiated, powerless object. Left alone in

the world by Pedro's death, Tita makes the active choice to recreate and enter the tunnel.

The wedding of Esperanza and Alex marks the end of a cycle of repression in the De La Garza family and the beginning of a new happiness for Tita and Pedro. The fire that results when Tita and Pedro embrace in the afterlife destroys the De La Garza ranch and all the stifling cultural notions that bore themselves out there. The demise of the physical domestic space seems an important aspect of Tita's legacy, for though she could not completely alter the code of the domestic realm during her life, the circumstances of her death destroy the realm in which she suffered so deeply. The only item that survives the fire is Tita's recipe book, which records not only her kitchen wisdom but also small tidbits (which come up periodically throughout the novel) about happenings in the family, preserving the De La Garza family history. However, the family will now continue in a new direction, epitomized by the cross-cultural marriage of Alex and Esperanza, from which the legacy of sorrow will be absent.

The structuring of *Like Water for Chocolate* establishes the filter through which the reader will experience the world of the novel. Like Tita –whose knowledge of life is "based on the kitchen"—the reader must explore the work through the role and power of food, guided by the recipes that begin each chapter. In addition to serving as a central organizing principle, food is often a direct cause of physical and emotional unrest, and serves as a medium through which emotions can be transmitted. Tita prepares most of the food in the novel, and she uses food to express her emotions because her lowly cultural status affords her no other opportunity to do so. Food is a potent force in the world of the novel, and it lets Tita assert her identity and power.

Esquivel believes in the power of food and the power of the emotions with which people create the magic, the alchemy of the kitchen. In this novel, the feminine arts of healing, caretaking, and cooking assume nearly mythical proportions, as Tita's culinary creations cause magical reactions.

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Power Restricted Realities: A Poststructuralist Critique of *The Matrix*

Abstract

The Matrix is a 1999 cyber punk science fiction film written and directed by The Wachowskis. It is set in a dystopian future where reality as perceived by humans is a simulated reality called "The Matrix." This simulated reality was created by sentient machines to control the entire human race. Neo, the protagonist, finds the truth and joins a group of people, who have escaped from the simulated reality, to fight against the domination of the machines and to free every human from "The Matrix." The film incorporates themes from Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation* and Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. The character Agent Smith, created by the machines to prevent humans from escaping "The Matrix," exerts constant surveillance on everyone inside the simulated reality. This can be seen as the concept of panoptic surveillance laid out by Foucault where oppressive power structures constantly keep watch of subordinate or marginalized groups. The simulated reality, "The Matrix," is based on Baudrillard's concept of hyperreality wherein an image has no connection to reality. The film shows how power constructs and controls reality and how man becomes a victim of power and is circumscribed by notions of reality. This paper is a poststructuralist critique of *The Matrix* undertaken from the interconnectedness of power and reality as conceived by Foucault and Baudrillard.

The Matrix is a 1999 cyber punk science fiction film written and directed by The Wachowskis. It is set in a dystopian future where reality as perceived by humans is a simulated reality called "The Matrix." This simulated reality was created by sentient machines to control the entire human race. Neo, the protagonist, finds the truth and joins a group of people, who have escaped from the simulated reality, to fight against the domination of the machines and to free every human from "The Matrix." The film incorporates themes from Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation* and Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. The character Agent Smith, created by the machines to prevent humans from escaping "The Matrix," exerts constant surveillance on everyone inside the simulated reality. This can be seen as the concept of panoptic surveillance laid out by Foucault where oppressive power structures constantly keep watch of subordinate or marginalized groups. The simulated reality, "The Matrix," is based on Baudrillard's concept of hyperreality wherein an image has no connection to reality. The film shows how power constructs and controls reality and how man becomes a victim of power and is circumscribed by notions of reality. This paper is a poststructuralist critique of *The Matrix* undertaken from the interconnectedness of power and reality as conceived by Foucault and Baudrillard.

Conventionally power is conceptualized as a capacity of powerful agents to realize their will over the will of powerless people or the ability to force them to do things which they hardly wish to do. Power is often considered a possession held on to by the people in power. Foucault criticizes this view in *History of Sexuality Volume 1*. According to him, power is

something which is performed: something like a strategy. In this context, Foucault explains in *Power/Knowledge*: “Power must be analyzed as something which circulates or as something which only functions in the form of a chain Power is employed and exercised through a netlike organization Individuals are the vehicles of power not its points of application” (98). Foucault explains that power is conceptualized as a chain or a network, as a system of relationships in society, not as a simple system of relation between the oppressed and the oppressor. He also explains that individuals are not the recipients of power but the sites on which power is enacted and resisted. Thus, Foucault's theory of power reconceptualises power itself and the role of individuals in power relations.

Foucault considers power as something performed in a particular context. He also sees power as a set of relations dispersed in society and located within institutions. Power exists as power relations in different forms and in different institutions like family, education, religion or administration. In Foucault's view, power is a major force in all relations within society. Power relations are often hidden in social body, but they are traceable in governmental forms or para-governmental apparatuses. Foucault's view of power as something existing in concentric circles deconstructs the Marxist or feminist model of power which is hierarchical or pyramidal, a simple form of oppression or repression. Foucault regards power as productive, something that brings about forms of behaviour rather than restricting freedom of individuals. In this regard, he refers to the case of the surveillance of boys in the 19th century as part of disciplining them and controlling their sexual desires and practices explained in *The History of Sexuality Volume 1*. Foucault argues in *Power/Knowledge*: “[This] was the sexualizing of the infantile body, a sexualizing of the bodily relationship between parent and child and a sexualizing of the family domain . . . sexuality is far more of a positive product of power than power was ever a repression of sexuality” (120). Thus, Foucault analyzes power as a positive product in every sphere of human activity. His concept of power helps him to view revolution as a freedom from oppression, a challenge to bourgeois power and an overturning of power relations. He explains in *Power/Knowledge*: “The state consists in the codification of a whole number of power relations which render its functioning possible, . . . revolution is a different type of codification of the same relation” (122). He means that the state is not a possessor of power but as an agent that constructs a range of power relations to position people in such a way as to make the system work.

Foucault states in *The History of Sexuality Volume 1* that where there is power there is resistance. Power is productive in that power relationship cannot be reduced to the level of master-slave relation or oppressor-victim relation. In order to exercise power there must be some resistance for it. Foucault even states that where there is no resistance, there is no power relation. So resistance is assumed to exist in all power relations. So in Foucault's model of power individuals challenge oppression in whatever forms convenient to them. Foucault wants us to view power not as a simple method of oppression of individuals by any political systems or institutions. He points out that resistance to oppression is more frequent than we imagine. James C. Scott also endorses Foucault's view of power and resistance. He explains in *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* that the powerful and the powerless are constrained in their behaviour within the power relations.

In most of his works Foucault underlines the intricate connection between power and knowledge. He observes in *Discipline and Punish*: “We should admit . . . that power produces knowledge . . . that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power

relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not . . . constitute . . . power relations” (27). Foucault develops his arguments on the complex relations between power and knowledge. He explains in *Power/Knowledge*: “There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth We are subjected to the production of truth through power and we cannot exercise power except through the production of truth” (93). Foucault is less concerned with power as an entity or a process. His objective is practical: to expose the political and strategic nature of those who thought previously that knowledge is either independent of power or vaguely linked to political institutions like criminology, disease or sexuality.

Michel Foucault conceives of the panopticon as the ultimate surveillance system. Foucault deals with the development of European prisons and penal systems in his work *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. In the second chapter, “Panopticism”, he elaborates on the panopticon as a source of the Confessional. Foucault views Jeremy Bentham's panopticon not only as an architectural innovation but also as a paradigm of a sophisticated mechanism of observation and surveillance. This is also an important document on the development of violence as a system and a discourse. Panopticon is a convenient mechanism for dominant power structures to exercise hegemony and violence on the subordinate groups to protect and perpetuate their political interests.

Architecturally, the panopticon is a circular or elliptical edifice with a tower at the centre. The outer ring of the building has a row of mutually isolated cells with a window opening into the centre and towards the tower and one in the opposite wall. This ensures a constant observation of the inmates by a supervisor in the tower at the centre. The supervisor remains invisible to the inmates, each shut up in a cell, a condemned man, a mad man or a patient. Foucault terms this system of observation which renders the power at the centre invisible as panoptic. This surveillance system has the powerful gaze at the centre and subjects of gaze at the periphery. The panoptic system arranges spatial unities that make it possible to see constantly and to recognize immediately. The system works under full lightening making visibility a kind of trap (1995:200). The inmates are mutually segregated in the cells in the outer ring of the panopticon. The panoptic system can be appropriated by the dominant power structures to perpetuate racial, sexual and economic hegemony on the subordinate groups.

Foucault also shows how historically it was an expedient employed by governments in the time of plague. Its basic function was to impose discipline on a state of disorder and confusion: “It lays down for each individual his place, his body, his disease and his death, his well being, by means of an omnipresent and omniscient power that subdivides itself in a regular, uninterrupted way even to the ultimate determination of the individuals or what characterizes him, of what belongs to him, of what happens to him” (1995:197). Panopticism is a technique through which disciplinary power is exercised and is able to function. It relies on surveillance and the internal training this produces helps to create a state of docility. It does not always require a display of physical force or violence. Direct force represents a frustrated form of discipline whereas in panoptic system the subject disciplines himself or herself:

. . . the major effect of the panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects,

even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary; that this architectural apparatus should be a machine for creating and sustaining a power relation independent of the person who exercises it; in short, that the inmates should be caught up in a power situation of which they are themselves the bearers (1995:201).

The panopticon is a mechanism designed to carry out the procedures for the behaviour modification and reformation of individuals. This is in contrast to the spectacle of punishments practiced in pre-modern societies of 18th century. The early punishment performed directly on the criminal's body displayed the power of a sovereign authority. The shift from direct to indirect punishment in the form of imprisonment marks the transition to modernity.

Foucault explains that the panoptic system constitutes a centralized gaze; the inmates are engaged in their separate worlds with no interpersonal contact. The inmates are under constant gaze of the supervisor who can observe the person without his being aware of it. The power exercised on the inmate is visible but unverifiable. The functioning of power is automatic in a state of permanent visibility. The inmates without conscious knowledge are made subjects of power. The panoptic ploy makes the inmates perpetuate the power system inherent in the design. It also creates a total deprivation of privacy. The ultimate surveillance itself is a form of punishment that creates a state of alienation and a sense of not belonging. Foucault argues that panopticon can also function as a laboratory: "It could be used as machine to carry out experiments, to alter behaviours, to train or correct individuals. To experiment with medicines and monitor their effect. To try out different punishments on prisoners, according to their crimes and character, and to seek the most effective one" (1995:203). For Foucault, panopticon represents a stage in the normalization of individuals. It is a site of criminology. This form of study improves the general awareness of individuals: "In fact, power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and knowledge gained of him belong to this production" (1994:194). Foucault points out that criminals are categorized based on their dispositions and the prison becomes a permanent observatory. The panopticon furnishes a solution to the problem of keeping criminals in a confined space.

According to Foucault, power is pervasive: there are two forms of power, regime power and disciplinary power; the former is always followed by the latter. Disciplinary power is an invention of bourgeois society and is also the primary means by which the cohesion of society is maintained and ensured. But disciplinary power is not simply a requirement of capitalist society. Foucault challenges the Marxist concept of modernity which states that economic reality or base determines other social factors or super structures. Foucault believes in the "materiality" of power. Disciplinary power is indispensable for industrial capitalism. Society's panoptic surveillance monitors bourgeois ideologies like racism, sexism and classicism and the subjects of these ideological biases are constantly gazed at and controlled.

The whole movie opens before us the threat and order of non physical exertion of power on human bodies. Thomas Anderson is a respectable and law abiding citizen; on the other hand his alter ego Neo is a hacker who hides away from the eyes of the law or he believes so. He is unaware of the fact that the Matrix is watching him even through the eyes of his friends

and customers. The question “what is Matrix?” enters his mind and on the quest for the answer the reality of his life and that of the whole human race unfold before Neo. Matrix is a reality of human race, but it is a fabricated reality, though the “real” is undistinguishable from this simulated real. Matrix is the name of control, which turns human bodies into electrical cells. There are clear instances in the movie which validate the presence of hyperreality and panoptic surveillance.

Arrangement of Human beings in Cells

Imprisoned human bodies are arranged in pods uniformly, each cell/prison room is similar to all the other billions of pods. The helpless human is provided with constructed reality. Mechanical surveillance is present all the time, but the human beings are not even aware of their imprisoned existence inside the pod; they are living in their simulation of reality. The structure becomes “fields to grow human beings” for meeting the energy needs of the machines, thus reducing each human being or body to a cell/battery.

Sentient Programs: The Moving Surveillance Camera

Sentient programs, the actual care takers of the carefully constructed illusion of the world, are also the eyes of the Panopticon. They have access to the projections of each human being in the Matrix, thus keeping a close eye on all human interactions and transactions. When the free beings, the rebels of Zion enter the Matrix, any and every projection in Matrix gives information to the Agents. The sentient programs are metaphors of the society which look at everything unnatural or different with a scepticism. They all look alike as the face of a mob and changes are always looked upon with careful gazes. The sentient programs aim at destroying Zion, the last standing human city, a threat to the peaceful though veiled existence of Matrix.

Zion: The Underground City/ Desert of the Real

The entire human population stays in a city called the Zion. It needs to be noted here that the city is underground, far below earth's crust closer to its core. The reason put forward is that the nuclear winter caused during the nuclear war between machines and the human race has turned the surface of the Earth very cold and the only place warm enough for human beings to survive is close to the core of the Earth. Looking at it from a Foucauldian concept, this is a physical attempt to escape the continuous and ever searching gaze of the machines.

Jean Baudrillard, in his *Simulacra and Simulation*, speaks about a world order confronted with the abolition of referents. He means that in the contemporary world the difference between reality and representation gets abolished. Simulation is the process of forming simulacra. It is a movement to hyperreality, wherein the world becomes hyperreal through hyperresemblance with the referents. Simulacrum is a representational double of the real; it is a signifier which lacks a signified. It may be defined as that which substitutes real in the absence of the real. It is a situation in which a word exists without meaning. This situation leads to a state of hyperreality.

According to Baudrillard, there are four stages of simulation based on the relation

between an image and its reality. The kind of reality changes with the type of simulation the image undergoes (63). In the first order simulation the image is the representational double of the real. Here the reality is simply represented. In this case the image is the copy of the original: for example, a portrait. In the second order the copy is slightly distorted. So we fail to distinguish between the real and its distorted representation. The representation projects something else as the copy of the real. Though there is no direct reference to the real, an idea of the referents is always there. In the third order, simulation is completely masked and the spectators are unaware of the reality. Simulation hides the absence of the real and only a signifier of the real exists. In this case the signifier of the real functions like the real creating a real-effect. As the real is hidden there is no referent. Baudrillard cites the examples of idols as examples of third order simulation. The spectators are ignorant of the real persons or things the idols stand for. Baudrillard also refers to Disneyland where the customers experience as reality a world of illusions. The customers interact and make significations provided by the referents. It is a make believe reality created in the context of no reality at all. In the fourth order simulation the real is completely abolished and there is no reality. The fourth order operates at the abstract level exchanging a simulacrum for another simulacrum. In this case the copy or the image substitutes the real. Baudrillard cites the examples of computer games for fourth order simulation. In this case the real is substituted by its image. This leads to hyperreality wherein an image has no connection to reality. The spectators experience a kind of reality at a particular space and time.

When the referents are abolished the signifieds are lost. So the signifiers independent of signifieds increase. The signifiers form images which are simulacra. The simulacra occupy the void created by the referents. In such a situation the image or the simulacrum becomes hyperreal or substitutes the real. Social networks and virtual reality are the best examples of hyperreality in the contemporary world. The entire world seems to be in a state of hypnosis. This provides a state of escape from a world of fetishism and commodification. The hyperreality provides a context to subvert the system of values and ideologies attributed to the contemporary society. For instance, the most important factor in the contemporary world is money; but the value of money is a product of imagination. Cinema itself provides a world of hyperreality. It creates images and relationships based on power and subversive values.

According to Baudrillard, hyperreal condition excels and outperforms the real itself. In this context, the real loses its significance; the order of the real and the specificity of truth disintegrate. This leads to a nebulous situation simulated by hyperreal conditions. Baudrillard argues that the real works in the context of referential truth. In the order of the real there is certainty and predictability. In the context of the real all images are exact between the real and its simulated image. Baudrillard cautions that the order of the real has no access to the world of simulation. The moment one simulates in a form of mimicry, the barrier between the real and unreal, between truth and untruth disappears and the whole system becomes chaotic. So a system in the order of the real can never allow simulation. Whenever the real trespasses into the world of hyperreality, the hyperreal conditions rupture. He cites the example of political simulation in which power is simulated with no referents as such. But it operates with a system of signifiers until the real obliterates and destroys the hyperreal condition of simulated power. According to Baudrillard, power operates through signifiers of power which help the performativity of power. Power cannot operate without its performative aspects. So operation of power requires strategies like crisis or desire. These strategies simulate power through signifiers without referents. So the people desire for power

or power signifiers and power re-enters the realm of discourses through power signifiers. When the hyperreal world is operational and performative in the absence of the real, the simulated power creates a condition of hyperreality. This situation remains as long as the real remains outside the world of hyperreality.

Simulation is the process to determine or locate the real. Baudrillard refers to a fable of Borges where a navigator arrives at a territory with the help of its map. He states that simulacrum in this case is truth of the existence of the territory. But when the map was conceived there was no territory. Eventually the territory substitutes the map. Baudrillard means that in the contemporary situation the real and the fictional cannot be distinguished. Baudrillard's essay "Gulf War Did Not Take Place" speaks about a situation of hyperreality. He argues that people across the world viewed only simulated images of the Gulf War through mass media. He cautions that dominant ideologies are circulated through simulated images.

The real world depicted in the film is a computer simulation, and Hyperreality allows the lives to be more easily and readily controlled. The leader of the rebels Morpheus asks the character Neo in the process of explanation:

What is 'real'? How do you define 'real'? If you are talking about what you can feel, what you can smell taste and see, then 'real' is simply electrical signals interpreted by your brain. (*The Matrix* 1999)

The Matrix undertakes the complete control of lives by giving us a false idea of control over our own lives in the projected reality. Neo doesn't believe in the concept of "fate", as he doesn't like the idea that he isn't in control of his life. The irony is that he is staying within the control of Matrix and serving its purpose without his knowledge. Once he is unplugged he learns to manipulate the manipulator, "rules can be bent and some can be broken" and it all depends on your mind because in the computer programmed and projected reality, "your mind makes it real." Matrix readily allows you to control your life, "What is Matrix?" asks Morpheus and answers: "Control."

In the real world the warrior rebels of Zion have no power. The torn cotton clothes take the place of the shining leather jacket. Their trainings in martial arts or combat is of no use, all they can do when the sentinels fight the Nebuchadnezzar is turn off the lights and stay as quiet as possible. In the real world there is not much the humans can do against the Matrix; they can fall on their stomachs and hope that the sentinels pass by without identifying the ship.

There arises this question whether the reality is better than simulated reality. The character Cypher decides that slavery to The Matrix is better than living an apparently free life in reality, where he has to sacrifice the luxuries that Matrix provides, eat the same tasteless food day after day. He chooses out of the reality on his own. Some forms of surveillance are chosen by us and preferred over privacy and freedom. Thus, CIPHER answers the question: reality is not as desirable as the stimulated reality. He says, "Ignorance is bliss."

In the introductory scene of Neo, there is a symbolic representation of Jean Baudrillard's work *Simulacra and Simulation* in which he opens the book to the chapter "On Nihilism." The book is hollowed out to keep the copies of forbidden software. The film makers guide and prepare our minds to respond to the events to follow. The book does not have what it offers on the cover but it is hollowed out to store stolen or hacked or forbidden software.

It is therefore realized that the film is constructed on the possibility of hyperreality. But the film makers have explored the complexity of hyperreality by combining the concept with the Foucauldian concepts of power and panoptic surveillance. This complexity creates an extensive burden on the audience: they are forced to view and evaluate the film in the context of the problematic of power and its intricate relations to conditions of hyperreality. The aesthetic of film is seen to have enforced a serious viewing of the film. Thus, *The Matrix* entertains and enlightens the audience where hyperreality is treated as a content in the filmic medium which itself is hyperreal.

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Power and the Dialectics of Appropriation: An Analysis of Power Operations in the World of Micros

Abstract

It is commonly accepted now that the era that we go through stands more for the discourse of the micros rather than that of the macros. As Lyotard could quite impressively predict in his Report on Knowledge, the postmodern condition has been characterised by 'an incredulity towards metanarratives'. We do not go for any metanarrative. But considering the mode of operation of power across human history, it is rather clear that now power operates the most where it is seen the least. In other words, power fails where it is visible. If in the earlier times power worked through means of direct exertion, in the 21st-century scenario it cannot show its face open in the light. It is, it is to be, concealed to ensure seamless operation. The question now is that how we are to read this mode of operation in the world of micronarratives. It is true that we have embraced the world of micros so much so that the technological advancement clearly indicates a world the affinity of which is to the micros and individual. That has its good side too.

Reading both factors parallelly-ie: the modus operandi of power operations and power relations, and the world's specific focus on micros- we are to reasonably suspect an appropriation of the latter by the former. Power always tends to appropriate, especially something that comes with potential for resistance. In my view power has already started appropriating the discourses of the micros. This would become the question especially in a global scenario of Global Capitalism that operates directly and/or indirectly, across boundaries, on almost all nooks and corners of the world. Power cannot be but with a macro form of operation despite any additional micro forms. The Postmodern world- of technology, capitalism and virtual space- the micros are almost literally used up to avoid any glance onto the macro level of power operations and power relations. Though great instances of resistance could be seen exclusively from and through the virtual space, a depoliticization is at work in the material world of power relations. Aijaz Ahmad had mentioned this trend. The same is ready at work in the world of technological revolution and virtual space. The micros are more at the disposal of the macro power-plays that are observed rather less in macro terms but more in terms of the micro signs. Thus an effective understanding of the power-plays, and an effective resistance to the power of today must be made by engaging a global understanding of the power operations. This paper tries to invite attention to these issues by discussing some of the sociopolitical events and trends.

Power has been a major preoccupation in the history of mankind. Any philosophical enquiry is a kind of power—a power that can put life within the frames of certain concepts; that can give a form to the chaos of life; that can transform life in its entirety. Gilles Deleuze discussed a similar thought, in a different context though. In fact this is what is so humane in this world—the natural life, bearing a human signature over it that is philosophy. So will or power has been with us—adversely or favourably—as philosophical quests for the meaning of life, from an immemorial past. Philosophy (or Power for that matter) works in terms of

differentiating at all times. But it has changed its form, means and ends as time passes. Considering the mode of operation of power across human history, it is rather clear that now power operates the most where it is seen the least. In other words, power fails where it is visible. If in the earlier times power worked through means of direct exertion, in the 21st-century scenario it cannot show up its face open in the light. It is, it is to be, concealed to ensure seamless operation. Added to that, power has always been with a tendency to appropriate resistive forces and counter actions. It tries first to counter, then to silence and soon to appropriate. The question now is that how we are to read this mode of operation in the world of micro narratives.

It is true that we have embraced the world of micros so much so that the technological advancement clearly indicates a world the affinity of which is to the micros and individual. That has its good side too. While we have started attending to the micros at the dawn of what we mark as the Postmodern era, it has been a very radical shift in the perception and interpretation of life. It was a threat posed against the hegemony of the macros. The world was behind the macro narratives of life ignoring the micros until then. The new thought started attending to the micros, posing questions against the power and its grand narratives of life, and illuminating the hitherto ignored micro lives. Where are we now in the progression of that thought? The core argument I make here is that the articulation of the micros has been appropriated and celebrated by the power, the global power, especially that of global Capitalism, making the new thought demanding further attention and redemption today. We studied and apparently understood the shift of thought, and now everywhere it is celebrated. It seems right here to contemplate on what Hanna Arendt has stated: understanding is “an unending activity by which, in constant change and variation, we come to terms with and reconcile ourselves to reality, that is, try to be at home in the world.” (Arendt 307-08). It is, as she suggests, an attempt to indoctrinate—which is a perversion of true understanding—every one of its subjects. In any case, “it introduces the element of violence into the whole realm of politics” (Arendt 309). And we are at home in the new world of micro narratives now. Here raises the question of violent indoctrination.

Power has been engaging Western philosophy as a theoretical theme from Machiavelli to Foucault through Hobbes, Marx and later Marxist schools. Unlike the premodern thoughts, modern understanding of power is rather critical of the same. The question of power still remains valid for yet another study because the long history of interpretation of power itself corroborates the dynamic and diverse forms of the very notion of power. For a long time until that of Foucault, power has been studied as a source of oppression, conflict, domination and destruction. Foucault proposed an idea of power that is rather constructive and positive as well.

Traditional Marxist schools understood power in terms of their notion of ideology which is similar to the Foucauldian idea of Discourse. On an economic Base-structure the social relations are maintained and operated through socio-cultural Superstructures. The social consciousness of man corresponds to the superstructural elements. For Marx, the productive forces determine the relations and structure of a particular social system. These superstructures function to legitimate the social power of the ruling class. Ideology is what facilitates this legitimating of power. Ideology naturalizes the domination of the ruling class over the ruled ones. Individuals are not free to choose their social relations: they are already installed into specific social relations by the productive forces, and are constrained by their

own material necessities. It is this material reality, according to Marx, that determines the consciousness. Ideology not only determines the modes and forms of life, but also prevents any understanding and knowledge of the true nature of power. Here power is understood in terms of domination, appropriation and legitimation.

Later Marxists, like Antonio Gramsci and Louis Althusser, developed the idea by bringing in more specific and nuance readings of the concept. Gramsci, in developing his idea, coined the term 'cultural hegemony' to refer to the operation of power in society. Hegemony may be explained as the condition in society in which the ruled ones unselfconsciously accept the values and ideologies of the rulers as their own. This in turn naturalizes the existing uneven social hierarchy of power and wealth, making the ruled ones accept their unfavourable positions in the social strata. Remember, any kind of thought-system can be hegemonic, including the postmodern, if it tends to monopolize the discourses. We can see them materially manifested in cultural productions, and through what Althusser called the ideological apparatus.

Foucault's understanding of power is a radical re-reading of the existing notions of power and power relations. According to Foucauldian interpretations, power is neither simply negative nor just destructive. The nature of power is positive and constructive. It might work through negations, but at the same time it is fundamentally 'productive' in nature, as in the case of sexuality. Society is a web of power relations, with individuals already pre-installed into it. There is no escape to a domain of non-power; power is everywhere. It has been so in the world of metanarratives; it is so in the world of the micro narratives as well. Revolution or resistance is only a strive for new models of power relations; a reconstitution or recodification of the existing power system in similar patterns of power relations.

Foucault goes further to state that knowledge and power are complementary to each other. They are intrinsically correlated. Power sanctions and authorizes certain interpretations of the world and life as knowledge. In turn, knowledge legitimates power and its operations as true and natural. The combined operation of power and knowledge—that which Foucault calls Power/Knowledge—distributes individuals in a field of power operations. Taking these points to a discussion of the micro narratives would reveal that even micros are just another interpretation of life, from a different point of view. The 21st century 'Micro-centrism' is just a new system of power relations, a new way of interpreting the world. Of course this has been so radical at a time when Macros overruled the thoughts; but rather less so today. In an inversion, now the Micros overrule the brains.

Power is generated and maintained through repetitive acts of power exertion. It is dynamic, relational and operational in nature. That is, power produces itself in and through repeated acts. These acts-of-power work through what Foucault calls 'discourses'. Discourse is the domain of all statements regulated by power centres. There can be discourses against the existing power itself, which might thwart the same, but the same will never create a domain of non-power; it will only modify and restructure power relations. "Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it; but also undermines it and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it." (*History of Sexuality* 100-101). Thus power is not just a means of oppression, but it can be used for resistance also. Discursive formations group certain statements in terms of the subjects, institutions or power centres. They condition the truth of every act of life and produces, as Foucault calls it, Power/Knowledge. Thus production and regulation of knowledge is an integral part of the struggle over power. Now

the question is about the kind of Power/Knowledge that our time produces. We must also ask how comprehensive and critical this Power/Knowledge is. This Power/Knowledge determines what is to be known and what is to be true/false. Governance is made through these acts of production of the Truth. The first step of resistance would be to understand and react to the hegemony of this universal grand truth. This truth may undergo changes in time, but at every given point of time the sense it emanates will be that of universal validity. Now the question would be about the 'truth' of a world that is attending exclusively to the micro lives. Hegemony of power or hegemony of truth is not an isolated phenomenon. It operates in a global platform. So isn't a globally wide view necessary along with attention to the micros and local? It is surprisingly odd to see that the world is moving towards a strange idea of 'homogenized global village' while at the same time the discourses in it are set to be exclusively on the micro lives.

In post industrial society and post industrial culture, the question of legitimation of knowledge is formulated in different terms. To recall Lyotard's definition: postmodern is 'incredulity towards metanarratives'. We have moved so much forward from that. The production of knowledge and truth today is exclusively in terms of the concept of the 'micro life'. Moreover, it has been taken almost for granted that any holistic interpretation is false. People tend to discard anything that is in 'global' 'grand' terms for they assume a falsity in it. Moreover, truth in today's context is authorized to be in the micro stories of life. It is reasonable then to suspect a probable and most possible erasure of the metanarratives from the whole scene. That is the reason why no media discussions on a reported suicide of bankrupted farmers ever reach global capitalism (or Globalization as such) as the fundamental reason for those deaths. Isn't it possible then that the new thought can be nothing better than what it replaced? Yes, when power appropriates the new discourse, it's more probable to be so. According to Lyotard, the grand narrative has lost its credibility regardless of whether it is a speculative grand narrative or narrative of emancipation. For him, postmodern thought is a "war on totality." This is true to an extent. Postmodern time is known for its specific, rather exclusive, emphasis on the micro narratives. It wanted not simply to include the micro stories into the scene; it wanted to destroy any totalizing metanarrative. It is true that any totalizing story is in a sense a kind of 'structural violence' (to use Johan Galtung's term). But we have, arguably almost fully, disregarded the concept of narratives-of-totality as such that we no longer care to read the global functioning of power, especially in an era of Globalization. The grand, global operations of power are gradually fading away before common people's eyes. People are getting more and more depoliticized. They become more and more estranged from the global operations of power. We no longer seem to have interested in discussing the macros. Every socio-politico-cultural production is made and read mostly in terms of the micros. This has become the vogue and identity of the postmodern era. Ironically enough, we are at the same time forced to imagine and experience a world that is said to be one big global village.

Power always has a tendency to appropriate acts of resistance in its own favor. If this does not happen an act of resistance may outgrow to thwart the existing power structure. It is at the intersection of these two points that we must seek the answer for the questions above stated. Reading both points—the modus operandi of power or power relations, and the world's specific focus on micros— side-by-side, we are to reasonably suspect an appropriation of the latter by the former. In my view power has already started appropriating the discourses of the micros. This would become the question especially in a global scenario of Global Capitalism

that operates directly and/or indirectly, across boundaries, affecting almost every nook and corners of the world. The notion of the micro forms— stories of the individual, the local, the ethnic—has so much influenced our time that we rather take that for granted. Take for example the case of social media. Reserving space for exceptions, it seems to be not simple exaggeration to tell that it creates a virtual platform parallel to the social space which in turn keeps much of the critical discussions exclusive to the virtual platform, reducing the potential for them to be actual social protests. Majority of critical discussions and protests originate and die out within the virtual space itself. We seem to have acquired 'a common social space' without losing the 'privacy' of our world of idiosyncrasies. The illusion of privacy is the key to accessing privacies. The overarching global functioning of Capitalism has been [mis]using these liberally allocated 'safe privacy' for its own good. News regarding mass surveillance is not too old to be forgotten. The point is that this over emphasis on the micros is in turn cultivating an apolitical world of social interactions. This depoliticization not only makes the global operations of Capitalism (or power in general) vague and least visible, but also resists a vision for a holistic reading of the world. It is so with the functioning of popular media as well. The new media culture is rather narrowly focused on individual stories of life and isolated forms of social formations and events. They rarely, not to say never, discuss the global influences on life. They create discourses in isolation, and that of a very limited range. By the term global scenario I do not mean international news, but a holistic critical reading of the world. In critical theory also we can see this trend. Those who talk about the condition of women, for example, is rather concerned about her individualized and isolated condition, almost rejecting any word of a global view. But how can we not talk about the economic status of women as a whole in global terms? Or, about the gender discrimination at workplaces as a general condition? Or the possession of wealth in general? These global factors are so important that they can actually determine the conditions in the individual stories. The effect of this shift from the global to the local has affected the social politics of the day also. The political formations are stumbling upon isolated events and eventualities that constitute discourse formations. Their world is losing sense of directions. Their eyes are stuck on their feet.

Global power cannot be but of a global form at its operations despite any additional micro forms. (I should add that I am not prioritizing one over the other.) It must be so especially in a time when the whole world has become a village—the Global Village. But surprisingly the Postmodern world—of technology, Capitalism and virtual space—the micros are almost literally used up to avoid any glance onto the global macro levels of power operations and power relations. This can be sensed in almost all the socio-cultural productions of today. Though instances of resistance and counter discourses could be seen sourced by the virtual space, a depoliticization also is at work in the society, in the real material world of power relations. The micros are becoming more at the disposal of the [veiled] macro forms of power-plays that cannot be neglected in a globalised context of life. Thus an effective understanding of the power-plays of the day must be sought by engaging a global reading of the power operations, obviously without ignoring the local or the micros. These two readings should be complementary to each other. One is not subordinate to the other; rather they together complete the critical philosophy of life.

Capitalism as a global phenomenon has been at work constructing power relations and hierarchies. With the coming of Globalization we are more prone to a kind of decentralized, rather globally located power. This should be read and understood in its totality as well. The

success of Globalization seems to be that it brought to us the micros while it expanded as the macro; it catered to the local and individual while it operated at a global range, and as a result it could conceal the global operations from the eyes of a majority. It watches over everyone without the subjects knowing who, how and from where. It controls the individuals without them realizing its range. This is the real hegemony—'the hegemony of the micros' to name it, under the influence of which a majority of the subjects has accepted their limited, isolated views and versions of life as the end of all. This is the dialectics of appropriation mentioned in the title. The emphasis on the nuances, on the micro narratives, has begun as a radical shift at the dawn of what we call the Postmodern era. It has been an eye-opener to a world that saw only the deceitful grand narratives. But what has it been developed into? It is losing its aim, its direction, when and where it goes into a blind celebration of ecstatic freedom of singularity. It is being appropriated by the domineering power in the former's disfavor. So what does this paper suggest? The idea is simple to state in a sentence—the macros also must be considered along with the micros. We cannot ignore the local, the singular, the individual or the micro narratives of life. But when we are fully immersed in a system of the micros, we tend to be ignorant of the macros or the global. This is not quite surprising as power has been thus at its operations—it either silences or destroys, or appropriates anything that questions it. Being alert to this nature of power would ward off any danger that might befall us out of ignorance. In short, the politics and philosophy of both the micro and the macro aspects of life should be studied critically, giving us a holistic and more comprehensive view of the world.

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Power of Visibility: How Social Visibility is Crucial to Empowerment of LGBT

Abstract

Everyone is born to heterosexual parents and hence there is an inherent assumption that all human beings are heterosexual. This all-pervading heterosexism is a major challenge for homosexual minority of any society, who are often described by social scientists as the "Invisible Minority". In developing countries like India, colonial laws against homosexuality combined with out-dated medical notions considering it as a mental-disease further marginalizes this already invisible community.

This paper is a study of how the western gay-liberation movement has used the power of visibility to advance gay-rights in European and American countries. Social visibility occurs due to a series of cultural interventions done by writers, artists and activists. The paper also delves into how globalization is helping the artists and activists in India to do 'cultural-appropriation' of these visibility models to suite the more conservative Indian society. Special focus will be on how the movement in Kerala has succeeded in creating positive visibility in the society over the past few years.

Introduction

Everyone is born to heterosexual parents and hence there is an inherent assumption that all human beings are heterosexual. Heterosexuals, the normative majority that largely control the world and its resources, often fall into the narrow-minded view of 'Heterosexism' which mandates that all humans fall under the gender-binary category of either Man or Woman and sexual union happen only between Man and Woman. This heterosexist view of human society immediately erases any Gender-Identities and Sexual-Orientations that does not fall under the category of Man-Woman union. Gender and Sexual minorities made invisible by 'Heterosexism' is named by the acronym LGBT (Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender). The umbrella term 'Queer' is also used in the literature to mention LGBT, as opposed to 'Straight' which stands for the normative heterosexual majority.

LGBT studies have found a place in modern academic world as part of the study of marginalized and oppressed minority sections of society. LGBT studies often draw its framework from feminist studies and racial/ethnic minority studies. And it's the visibility that first originates through literature and academics that forms as the foundation stone for the empowerment and emancipation of this marginalized and taboo sect. This paper is a study of how the western gay-liberation movement has used the power of visibility to advance gay-rights in English-speaking European and American countries. Social visibility occurs due to a series of cultural interventions done by writers, artists, academicians, scientists and activists. The paper also delves into how globalization is helping the writers, artists and activists in India to do cultural-appropriation of these visibility models to suite the more conservative Indian society.

Visibility Vs Invisibility

The LGBT minority is often described by social scientists as the “Invisible Minority”. To be more precise, the homosexual population within LGBT, comprising of Lesbians Gays and Bisexuals, are very much socially invisible as their difference from the 'straight' world is only in the gender to which they are sexually attracted. On the other hand, the Transgender population within LGBT community display socially visible gender expressions, in looks and acts, that are different from the gender expressions one would expect based on the gender assigned to them by birth based on genitals. In a way, transgender individuals validate “Gender as Performance” theory (Butler) by Judith Butler, which redefines gender as not what is between your legs but as how you perceive yourself and perform it socially. For a transgender individual, their gender-nonconforming personality becomes more and more socially visible as and when they grow up and embrace their new gender identity different from the one assigned at birth by genital-gender. For e.g. a male-to-female transgender is a person born with male genitals but later realizes that he is actually a woman trapped in a man's body and tries to transition to her real female gender identity. Hence the transgender identify is more socially visible where as the homosexual identity remains invisible, confined to the private space of bed rooms or totally repressed by the individual. This paper will be giving more stress on the homosexual identify, which appears as 'visibly straight' and remains invisible until its revealed by the individual.

Invisibility has its perks to some extent as a survival strategy. Realizing and coming to terms with one's same-gender attraction is a gradual slow process starting from late childhood or early teenage. Even after realizing about the consistent nature of one's same-gender attractions, it's a big step to finally self-accept oneself as gay (Richard). Even after self-acceptance, telling someone else about it is an even more daunting task. In developing countries like India, British introduced colonial era laws against homosexuality combined with out-dated medical notions considering it as a mental disease and social view of it as a sexual perversion makes the task of revealing one's gay identity a very difficult and stressful one. Sexuality is an adult topic and revealing the orientation at a young age, especially when one is still a student, is not at all advisable. So, in all these formative years, invisibility is helpful for the survival of a homosexual individual.

Trouble with Invisibility

The same invisibility that protects a homosexual individual in their formative years becomes a curse as one grows up into an adult. This is because of the heterosexual expectations that society places on a homosexual adult and the family and social pressure to do a heterosexual arranged-marriage. Living an invisible secretive life as a homosexual also takes a negative toll on the personal life of a homosexual. A secret love-life reduces the chances of finding a stable, life-long, monogamous partner. A secret homosexual life also can result in love-life reducing to furtive sexual encounters with multiple partners which predisposes the individual to associated physical and mental harms. Secrecy breeds fear and shame around gay identity. Sexuality being a core-identity of a human being, secrecy surrounding it can make a person less confident and less sincere in all their dealings in life.

Apart from the negative affects on a homosexual individual, invisibility also can further fuel homophobia among straight public. In the absence of authentic representations from

real queer people, homophobes will have a field day flooding the media with incorrect information about queer people. Such negative stereotypical representations can be seen in erstwhile Hollywood films and current Indian Cinema. Queers as overtly effeminate characters providing comic relief or as psychopathic lovers extracting revenge on disinterested objects of desire etc. are common recurring themes in mainstream commercial cinema and television programs. In fact commercial cinema, which is dominated by upperclass-heterosexual-male, thrives on stereotypes immersed in racism, caste-ism, misogyny and homophobia. And there have always been a 'parallel cinema' movement with a more balanced, realistic treatment on class, caste, gender and sexuality.

Homophobia is basically the “fear of unknown”. The heterosexist erasure and invisibility is the fundamental reason behind homophobic oppression. Social visibility of real queer people as family, friends, colleagues, public figures etc. cures homophobia. Even though sexuality is a private matter, it does have a public component to it. Private sexual union of 'man and woman' is legitimized publicly as husband-wife or lovers or life-partners. The same should be happening for private queer unions as well. The feminist slogan of “Personal is Political” applies well to sexual and gender minorities as well. Even though their identity is private and personal, it does have a public component to it which is usually made invisible due to oppression by the majority. Once the oppressed victims have the terminology and voice to articulate their victim hood, that articulation itself paves the path for their empowerment. Language is a public domain artifact which carries and enforces its own power-structure dictated by the dominant upper-class, heterosexual, male. Women's writings, Dalit/Black writings, LGBT writings etc. articulate their oppression, often by coining new words and making no compromise on personal liberty or autonomy (Zaretsky). The process by which a homosexual individual transitions from invisibility to visibility is termed as “Coming Out”. Coming out is a hierarchical, life-long process as it needs to be performed on parents, siblings, close, friends colleagues, acquaintances etc. Social visibility normalizes a homosexual individual. Increased social visibility and acceptance of real queer individuals motivates a closeted queer person to come-out and lead a more honest, meaningful life.

Visibility through Literature

In any culture, the first seeds of social change and reformation are sown by its writers. They are truly the engineers of human civilization. Psychology, Law, Social morals & customs etc. follow Literature. Language is the vehicle that carries culture over generations and culture evolves as history progresses in time. And history becomes no more “His” story – “He” being the dominant Upper-class, Heterosexual, Male. All marginalized groups like Women, Black, Dalit, LGBT, Poor, Disabled, Ethnic minorities etc. get a voice as and when society evolves. Writers play the role of pioneering social reformers who for the first time give a voice to the marginalized. The Greek poetess Sappho (5th century BC) is the oldest known writer who dealt with homosexual love in literary works. Sappho wrote poems on same-gender love between women. The word 'lesbian' derives from the island named Lesbos in Greece where Sappho lived during her creative years. Michelangelo, 15th century Italian poet, painter and sculpture, has written romantic sonnets addressed to men of youth who were objects of his desire. These sonnets are considered to be world's very first written expression on homosexual love between men. Michelangelo also depicted stunningly beauty

of male body in his sculptures and paintings and is now considered by many to be queer. Shakespeare's "fair youth" sonnets, which got published 50 years down the line from Michelangelo's sonnets, are also among some of the earliest and widely popular written expressions of romantic love between men.

Coming to more recent era, even though Oscar Wilde (born 1854, Ireland) did not explicitly write on homosexual love, his personal life as a homosexual came under public scrutiny and subsequent criminal incarceration as per the anti-sodomy laws prevailing in England those years. His description "The love that dare not speak its name" has become part of pop-culture as an epiphany for gay love. In modern era, Truman Capote (1924) and Armistead Maupin (1944) are pioneering queer writers who are openly gay but still enjoy mainstream success and fame.

Visibility through Visual Arts

In modern times, mass-media visual art forms like cinema and television have huge impact in shaping the conscience of society. Hollywood, which invented and pioneered movie-making, has always been a safe-heaven for queer people with creative disposition. In its formative years, Hollywood films portrayed subtle to overt homophobia, pandering to the wild imaginations of the majority straight audience. Ironically, Hollywood movie industry also provided a safe space for queer artists and technicians to thrive in secrecy. The famous documentary "Celluloid Closet" (1995) dealt in detail about this contradictory nature of Hollywood industry. The documentary is based on a book by Vito Russo and is a pioneering work on how homophobia and prejudice is reinforced through films, the most influential art form of modern times. The documentary triggered a lot of discussions on the harmful effect of cinema in fueling homophobia and forced the Hollywood industry to really rethink about the negative LGBT representations in its productions.

The movie 'Philadelphia' (1993) is a major milestone where a big mainstream star like Tom Hanks did its lead character of a gay man with AIDS fighting homophobia. 'Birdcage' (1996) is a very popular comedy film about a gay-couple who run a gay-bar and their funny attempts at hiding their identity when their daughter's prospective groom and family visit their home. Another important mainstream movie, significant for its first time portrayal of very close friendships that develop between straight women and gay men, is 'My best Friend's Wedding' (1997). Mainstreaming of gay-themed movies came to its highest pinnacle when 'Brokeback Mountain' (2005), a romantic drama about two gay cowboys of 1960s USA, won the Oscar award for the best direction and screenplay.

Among TV shows, the world-wide popular situational comedy (sitcom) series 'Friends' (1994 – 2004) introduced many queer sub characters as it weaved a daily humor routine around its six straight protagonists. Actress and comedienne Ellen Degeneres made a huge impact on society using television as a medium. Ellen the real-life person, as well as her lead character in the TV sitcom 'Ellen', came out simultaneously as lesbian in 1997, which made her the first openly lesbian actress to play an openly lesbian character on television. It was the doors opened by Ellen that later paved way for path-breaking sitcoms like 'Will & Grace' (1998-2006), based on the friendship between a gay man and a straight woman.

LGBT Visibility in India

Due to invisibility and poor human rights of LGBT in India, many of the educated homosexual youth of the country immigrate to USA or Europe seeking greener pastures. So the first signs of LGBT visibility among Indians occurred in its USA based Diaspora. A San Francisco based organization named 'Trikone' came up in 1986 catering to the needs of queer NRIs in USA. They also published a literary-cultural magazine by name 'Trikone', which was a trail blazer for Indian queer writers. Among mainstream Indian English writers, Kamala Das was one of the first to deal with queer topics in her autobiography and short stories. Playwright and film maker Mahesh Dattani is openly gay and created many queer themed plays like 'Night Queen' and 'Do the Needful'. He also directed gay-themed film 'Mango Souffle' (2002) which is based on his play 'A muggy night in Mumbai'. Hoshang Merchant and R. Raj Rao are two other noteworthy writers who are openly gay and wrote stories (Merchant) and novels (Rao) that advanced gay-visibility in urban India.

Vikram Seth, one of the most successful mainstream writers, incorporated gay themes into his highly acclaimed novel 'A suitable Boy'. Academicians Ruth Vanitha and Salim Kidwai dug deep into Indian history and culture and authored a seminal encyclopedic book named 'Same-Sex Love in India' chronicling same-gender desire in India starting from Vedic period to modern times (Vanitha).

On the social front, journalist Ashok Raw Kavi is the first Indian to come out publicly as homosexual. His historic revelation happened in 1986 and he became a writer-activist spearheading gay-liberation and visibility in India. He later started a gay magazine named 'Bombay Dost' catering to India's urban gay men. Deepa Mehta's Hindi movie 'Fire' (1996) caught national attention for its bold and controversial portrayal of lesbian love. Much of the social organizing among LGBT of India happened around opposing section 377 of India's penal code, which criminalized "unnatural sex". This outdated and archaic law was introduced by British in many of its erstwhile colonies including India, way back in 1860. Regular annual LGBT Pride Parades started happening in major metro cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore etc. from 2008 onwards.

LGBT Visibility in Kerala

Kerala, with its diverse and liberal literary traditions, has never shied away from dealing with queer themes in Malayalam literature. Madhavikkutty, an Indian pioneer in openly and honestly writing about libidinal desires of women, have written few Malayalam short-stories dealing with both gay and lesbian romantic attachments. Her controversial autobiography 'Ente Katha' (1973) also mentions about queer people who were part of her life journey. 'Khasakkinte Ithihasam' (1969) by O.V. Vijayan, the most celebrated Malayalam novel of all times, has a sub-plot of subtle homosexual love between men. Jayan K Cherian's Malayalam poems like (Cherian, 'Polymorphism'), (Cherian, 'Nishpakshanayirikkunnathine patti') etc. deal with male-to-male desire in the context of an India-born USA immigrant's experience. Muraleedharan Tharayil is a pioneer in queer film studies on Malayalam movies. His essay 'Queer Bonds' (Tharayil) provides an analysis of queer shades in strong male friendships depicted in few mainstream Malayalam movies. "Midhyakalkkappuram – Swavarga Laimgikatha Keralathil", a compilation of essays by various authors edited by Reshma Bharadwaj, is the first book published in Malayalam on the culture and politics of sexual and

gender minorities (Bharadwaj). Kishor Kumar, the first Malayali to reveal his gay identity publicly in Malayalam print media, wrote various film-studies (Pullapally) and human rights articles (Kumar) on gay emancipation in mainstream magazines.

Much of the initial LGBT community organizing in Kerala was spearheaded by women as invisibility and homophobia combined with rampant misogyny entrenched in Kerala's patriarchic society was taking a toll on its lesbian community. In 1980s and 1990s, news paper reports were surging in Kerala about lesbian suicides, often as a lover-pair. Canadian immigrant Malayali Deepa Vasudevan, who is now settled in Kerala, started an organization called 'Sahayathrika' in 2002 as a support group for lesbian/bisexual women and transgender persons. USA based film-maker Ligy Pullapally's Malayalam lesbian themed movie 'Sancharram' (2004) really helped the queer community to articulate its plight to the mainstream society. In 2014, Jijo Kuriakose, a gay painter and writer, started 'Queerala' as an organization for Kerala LGBT but mainly catering to gay men. LGBT Pride Parades have been happening annually in Kerala since July 2010. Some of the recent mainstream Malayalam films have started addressing gay issues. Notable among them are 'English' (2013) by Shyamaprasad and 'Mumbai Police' (2013) by Rosshan Andrews. The VIBGYOR International Short and Documentary Film Festival, hosted annually at Thrissur, has been screening short films with special focus on gender and sexuality.

Conclusion

The invisibility due to heterosexist erasure is the root cause for homophobic prejudice of mainstream society. And writers and artists are pioneering lone-wolf activists who give a voice to communities oppressed by racism, caste-ism, misogyny, homophobia etc. When the truth about LGBT identity is self-represented, it shatters centuries long held myths about this much marginalized community and empowers them. As they say, “The Truth will set you Free”

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Relative Reality in *A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters* by Julian Barnes

Abstract

Lyotard dates the advent of postmodernism at the end of 1950 when the state of knowledge is changed as society enters to post industrial age and culture to postmodern age. Lyotard attacks metanarratives and claims the power of individual in telling their own account of reality influences upon so many earlier definitions. Baudrillard, another postmodern philosopher, also believes that the reality is digitalized due to the influence of the media and on the other hand, fading the importance of face-to-face communication. So in postmodernism reality becomes a relative concept depend on many other concepts such as culture, time, power, and other social facts. Julian Barnes' novel, "A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters", deals with the idea of accessing truth particularly about past. The main theme of the novel is to indicate how the reality becomes hard to grasp from postmodern perspective. The influence of political power, human's ambitions, time, art and religion to change and disguise the reality, are the main issues of the book. In the following, the influence of power, in different levels and meaning, upon reality as Barnes depicts it in his novel will be discussed. How the author depicts such issues in literary context is going to be argued.

Key words: Postmodernism, Reality, Religion, Power, and Human defections...

Introduction:

Julian Patrick Barnes is a critically acclaimed British novelist, and one of the popular and recognized authors in English literature of post-war period. Over the period of three decades, he has published fifteen novels, three collections of short stories and many essays. Three of his novels namely: *Flaubert's Parrot*, *England, England*, and *Arthur and George*, have been short listed for Man Booker Prize. And his novel, *The Sense of an Ending* won the Booker Prize in 2011. He is mostly well known for his attention to literary structure and for his themes of history, reality, art, love, and death.

In this paper Julian Barnes' fifth novel *A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters*, which exemplifies several of major tendencies of postmodernist historical fiction, is investigated. This particular novel of Barnes' along with *Flaubert's Parrot*, are considered as his most postmodern novels. It contains of fourteen stories in ten and half chapters, which none of them are set in chronological order. Barnes, in this novel, challenges the postmodern concepts of truth, reality, fiction and history. Emily van Buuren, in her article, observes:

The exploratory juxtaposition of various narrative modes, including different registers, first, second and third-person narrative voices, male and female viewpoints, creates a plurality of narrative perspectives and multiplicity of discursive genres which succeed in drawing attention to how each constructs its own history: 'They were chosen, they endured, they

survived: it's normal for them to gloss over the awkward episodes, to have convenient lapses of memory' (4).

Daniela Oancearecognizes, "The novel has moved from the centre of the narrative genre to the margin of other genres, extending its limits beyond the boundaries of the latter"(100). This novel is considered as novel only for its number of interlocking motifs and images and Barnes' insist of seeing it as a novel. As he defines a novel in an interview: "A long piece of writing with something wrong in it" (an interview with Melvyn Bragg, The South Bank Show). The main point in the novel is that we fictionalize to understand. "This novel reveals how the process of narrativization itself problematizes not only the nature of historical discourse but also the relationship between history and fiction"(Sesto 53).

From the postmodern perspective, the truth is a relative concept that could be influenced by many issues such as power, at any means; language; and culture. Postmodernism is an era, according to Lyotard, with an equation between wealth, efficiency, and proof. He argues that even the game of scientific language become the game of the rich, in which whoever is wealthiest has the best chance of being right. After the emergence of the notion of inequality between world and word, illuminating the ways of accessing the truth, in postmodernism, turn to be a debatable issue among the critics and theorists.

The role of power upon reality became more important after empowering the marginalized people by Lyotard's notion of 'the death of metanarration'. By this theory, micronarration has got significant aspects to get the truth (Wood 22). Since, the challenge of being right and real turns to be a widespread challenge between everyone, postmodernism attempts to clarify these matters in order to get close to the truth.

Perspective:

Part I:

Not only, in this novel, but also in the novels; *Talking It Over and Love Etc.*, Barnes raises how the different perspective could disguise the truth or keep us away from it. The first chapter of the *A History of the World*, "Stowaway", is a story of the events had happened in Noah's Ark through the woodworm's perspective. This story uncovers new aspects of the events to the readers through the victim's perspective, who is species so entirely different from our own. The narrator repeatedly expresses human deficiencies; in memory, belief and dates. The story, with the tone of sympathetic condescension, challenges to tell the readers that some part of truth was hidden from them due to the previous accounts were all from human imperfect perspective.

He indicates the fallibility of human interpretation, belief, and understanding of reality. What a change, then, to hear the story from a narrator as an insect, no less or as a person so often looked down upon. What the woodworm presents, is a complicated truth rather than the ugly one. As the tale continues the readers again attacked for their simplicity of understanding. He frankly stated his bitter and resentful ideas about the human species, but in a compassionate tone that made their ideas easier to accept. On one hand, his language suggests a reliability that hardly can be found in any other account. And on the other hand, the readers might finally ask how much we could rely on a woodworm though he was an eyewitness.

Woodworm states, "All right, all right, Noah had his virtues. He was a survivor and not just in terms of the voyage. He also cracked the secret of long life, which has subsequently been lost to your species. But he was not a nice man. Did you know about the time he had the ass keel-hauled? Is that in your archives?" (20) The woodworm has his speculations: That is nearly the end of my revelations.

They are intended – you must understand me – in the spirit of friendship. If you think I am being contentious, it is probably because your species – I hope you don't mind my saying this – is so hopelessly dogmatic. You believe what you want to believe, and you go on believing it. But then, of course, you all have Noah's genes. No doubt this also accounts for the fact that you are often strangely incurious (25).

The woodworm version might upset the readers by pointing out the inevitable folly of their own nature. Some truth about the history and ourselves, which was hidden from us, has been revealed. "You aren't too good with the truth, either, your species. You keep forgetting things, or you pretend to . . . ignoring the bad things makes it easier for you to carry on. But ignoring the bad things makes you end up believing that bad things never happen" (29). This story and the other stories of the same kind are only examples of what the postmodern world reaches; perspective has the power to change everything. Therefore, such an attitude, not only makes winning the farfetched truth, but also, makes the journey of getting the truth endless.

Part II:

The same as woodworm, Kathleen, is the survivor and the main character in the story, "The Survivor". She is one of the marginalized characters, in male-centred world, who is abused, neglected, and disbelieved and ultimately she survives. She steals his boyfriend's boat and sets out to the sea in order to escape a nuclear war. She was rescued but she believes that she reaches to the deserted island and she falls asleep and continues her voyage in a dream. But her dreams have some details about her life. The story is a dream within a dream. The matter is that the readers could hardly distinguish between the reality and the dreams.

Doctors attribute her illness to persistent victim syndrome means she is victimized by the enormous emotional investment. She is wrestling with her own mind. Doctors say that she is fabricating. "You make up a story to cover the facts you don't know or can't accept. You keep a few true facts and spin a new story round them". They add "It was the mind she decided; was the cause of it all. The mind simply got too clever for its own good, it got carried away. It was the mind that invented these weapons, wasn't it?" (110, 120). When we discover that this entire journey may be only a delusion of a severely traumatized woman and once we make that discovery, as had happened in the case of woodworm as well, we realize her truth is untrustworthy.

Not only, the history was written by the victor (not the victim), but also it was not genderless. Similarly, Hutcheon observes in her *A Poetic of Postmodernism*, the word 'History' is turned to 'his story' that makes the problem of finding the reality of the past double-edged. Barnes' theme of the oppressiveness and inescapable interconnectedness of the history of the world, hints the point that each perspective, however unreliable, gets us closer to truth than any myth could. Barnes is reinforcing the point made by Kathleen; every

thing is truly connected even the ugly bits.

Human Ambition, Media and Politic:

In other chapters, the author points out the other issues, which influence the truth. In the story, "Visitors", the author depicts the story of a person who is public speaker and a famous for his TV program about history, and comparative culture. The story hints the point that how the influence of media and human's ambitions of being famous might change the reality. The protagonist "flattered his audience and deprecated his television fame" (41) by adding some unnecessary and ornamental matters to subject. Humans could alter the truth particularly about the history for their own interest and desires. When the Arab visitors invades the ship they believe that the truth about both the history and their nations were reformed in order to satisfy the political interest of the western government.

Truth and history, as Arabs explain, and as Franklin realizes, has far more oppressive consequences than that. The world is not a cheerful place. I would have thought your investigations into the ancient civilizations would have taught you that. But anyway . . . I have decided to take your advice. We shall explain to the passengers what is happening. How they are mixed up in history. What that history is (51).

Arabs ask Franklin to explain the history to the audience according to the new account they gave to him. Franklin obeys, and recounts to his captive audience the repercussions of a history they already seem to know: "If he could feel a brooding hostility in some parts of the audience, there was also, strangely, a wider drowsiness, as if they'd heard this story before and had not believed it then either" (56). On one hand, we are bored by the repetition of fact, and of interpretation we do not believe. We hear what we want to hear, and the Arabs' version, does not align with that of the passengers. "The passengers", as the Arab says, "are mixed up in history," one which calls on different events, mythical like the Ark, or real like the anti-Zionist campaign run by the terrorists. And Franklin, in being told to present the material to the passengers in such a way that they can understand it, is effectively made to fictionalize history. Shows that past and present are linked with man's choice, and his willing and power influence history.

Art:

The story "Shipwreck" contains of two parts; part One (I) is a documentary narrative by the author which deals with the ill-fated voyage of Medusa, and the second part (II) is an essay on both the genesis and technical execution of Gericault's painting 'Scene of Shipwreck', which depicts Medusa's shipwreck. It is an attention to the world of art and is a discussion of accuracy and truth in art. As art is an objective truth, could have the power to change the truth or make it less important or real. What will happen to the truth when it turns to be art? "How do you turn catastrophe into art? Nowadays the process is automatic . . . We have to understand it, of course, this catastrophe; to understand it, we need to imagine it, so we need the imaginative arts" (285).

After enumerating what was not painted in eight parts, Barnes describes the steps how the catastrophe turns into the art. But the most important part of the chapter is where Barnes observes the crucial differences between the reality and art. He demonstrates the necessity of

changes in the art and denotes that such changes are inevitable. As the author denotes, the number of men on the board, how they appeared as muscled and health, and the things were abandoned by the artist because could not be painted are some of the differences between the painting and the reality. The main theme of the chapter could be summed up in one of the sentences; "truth and life, at the start, to be sure; yet once the process get under way, truth to art is a greater allegiance" (132).

Time:

Time as a natural element has its own influence upon every thing and reality as well. Time as Baudrillard also observes in his *Simulacra and Simulation* could even make the acceptance of the image of the reality instead of it. In the chapter "Shipwreck" the painting, with all its deficiencies, that is the image of the Medusa would consider as the reliable document after passing long time. Fernando Canale acknowledges: "In postmodern times, knowledge and truth have become relative to the historical and cultural conditions of the cognitive subject. . . . The epistemological shift implies that truth changes with the times" (87).

In the first part of the chapter "Three Simple Stories" we encounter that how the tragedy of the Titanic shipwreck turn to be farce after passing the time. This increases the possibility of the notion that time erodes the feeling in the reality. Even the woodworm in "Stowaway", pointed out the role of time and human's memory as one important reason why the truth could be changed. The narrator refers to time as patient one and inevitable changing reason. In other chapters also this issue is being referred repeatedly, such as in "Upstream".

Conclusion:

Revealing great truth about the history and from different perspective, but by unreliable narrators such as a woodworm and the mentally disabled woman, possibly is not meaningless. First of all, the postmodern notion of inaccessibility of the truth particularly about the history is echoed in the novel. Though, the fundamental and challenging questions about truth and history has been raised by the author, the answer is still farfetched. It implies that even the new information and perspectives about the reality do not guarantee catching the truth. Barnes, unlike postmodernism that celebrate the death of truth and final conclusion, insists that the truth is accessible but it is not easy. This novel made the intelligent reader to doubt about their ideas and to question such as;

Is that, when the narrator is changed so many facts might change or emerge?

Is that the narrator's reliability in each story is important?

And finally, is that asking questions might reveal so many facts, while we mostly satisfied with what we already know.

Although, in almost all chapters of the novel we face the issues, which problematize accessing the truth, Barnes in the chapter "Parenthesis" recognizes love as genius and valid thing that could change the truth but in a positive way. The author makes an effort to aware the readers of almost all of the problems they would come up when they look into the truth. But in the chapter, "Parenthesis", he firmly requests the readers to allow love change the ugly truth

of their life. He observes, how the lack of love leads to create tragedies and violence. He invites every one to give and get love and learn how to love in their lives.

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Power and Freedom of Expression

Abstract

As Meredith B McGuire put forward in his work discovering religious power, power is a pervasive but frequently implicit theme in the sociology of religion. Religious groups have asserted socio, political and economic power over the community spelling the spree of one's religion. They are usually a significant factor in the fervour, intensity and interpretation of experience of power.

This paper tries to draw similarities between the banning and silencing of authors in different contexts and in different time and space based on religious power structures from following three recent happenings.

- 1) Charlie Hebdo Issue for profaning Prophet Mohammad.*
- 2) Issue of Perumal Murukan for his book 'Madhorubagan',*
- 3) Death of Pakistani human rights activist, Sabeen Mahmud*

The above three cases happened in three different countries where Christianity, Hinduism and Islam are the major religions. Though all the three religions propagate tolerance, love and peace, in practice it becomes off repeated rhetoric. In all three cases mindless activism led to hampering of free speech. Charlie Hebdo, the French satirical magazine paid a heavy compensation for caricaturing the minority in an offensive manner. The decision of Perumal Murugan, the Tamil Nadu-based writer, not to write anymore again questions the tolerance of the society in front of the sharpened pen. His decision comes on the back of raging protests against his latest book, 'Madhorubagan', by Hindu and caste-based outfits. Liberal, social activist and founder of T2F Sabeen Mahmud, who died from gunshot wounds, was a woman who dreamt of creating an alternative to religious nationalism in Pakistan but unfortunately a dream with numerous possibilities was shattered with bullets.

Instances are there where the line between freedom of speech and defamation gets blurred. The noted author Paranjy Guha Thakurta is of the opinion that 'you can't have freedom of speech if people are not ready to be offended.' In fact, the freedom to mock is crucial to any vibrant democracy. At the same time, right to express often turn out to 'right to insult'. There is no doubt that concepts such as 'power' and 'freedom of speech' are rarely detached from the culture and values of the time and they need to be constantly interrogated, challenged and investigated for selectiveness or partiality.

The proposed paper tries to analyze these issues on the basis of constitutional rights, freedom to express, religious discourse, right to question, freedom to insult, plebiscites' politics and ethos of secularism.

Key words – freedom of speech, social control, conscience collective, religious discourse, intolerance.

As Meredith B McGuire argues in his work *Discovering Religious Power*, power is a

pervasive but frequently implicit theme in the sociology of religion. Religious groups have asserted social, political and economic power over the community through religion. A religious group is usually a significant factor in the fervour, intensity and interpretation of the experience of power. Is there a cultural, religious, or social gap among the communities which remains unfathomable that communities are cursed to look at each other with suspicion, disdain and vengeance? Terrorism has no face, but they can create a phase of terror. Why do they provoke such fear or even hatred in us? The only logical answer is that they do not fit into the existing social order. Freedom of expression is not something to be put in a pot and boiled down. Liberty is not pick and mix. The bits cannot be chosen as one likes. Either it exists or it does not. The law of mitigation sometimes sanctions those who use it to harm or defame. Any act of righteousness should happen without hurting others. These liberties all depend on each other.

The concept of social control has its roots in the Darwinian tradition where the major dichotomy was between organism and nature. Various theories of social control have utilised the same to analyse the relation between the individual and the society. These theories formulate that the society has to control the animalistic nature of man. If an order is to be established and maintained, man's tendency to pursue his self-interest must be limited through learning or selection, or both. The emergence of the concept of social control thus indicated a waning of the utilitarian notion of the natural harmony of self-interests. (Pivtts).

Durkheim's concept of *conscience collective* is explained by Pivttsas “constraining men, with a power directly proportional to the intensity of the interaction around its specific representations, to behave in certain ways regardless of their own selfish interests.” (Pivtts). According to Malinowski, since virtually everyone is engaged in social relations, every individual becomes an agent of social control; and the threat of termination of social relations is the basic means of social control. (Gibbs409). When a person gets influenced, he or she becomes the prey of social control.

The discourse of religion is a crucial tool for social control. Though all the religions preach love, peace and tolerance, history proves us that the 'Crusades' or the 'Jihads' were part and parcel of various religions. The Catholic military campaigns of the Middle Ages to preserve their religion or '*jihad*' which means the war or struggle against non-believers or the '*Shiv Sena's*' ideology of protecting Hinduism all are different forms of religious discourse in various spatiotemporal scenarios. A small fraction of the society interprets various religious discourses to suit their interests which affect the life of the entire society. A set of parallel discourses is born out of the interpretations and inferences they draw from their understanding of religion. To propagate these parallel discourses, they lay down certain rules and regulations in the name of religion. When their mode of social conduct is questioned, they become the agents of intolerance. This intolerance takes up different forms from killing to terrorism, to silence those who question parallel discourses. Also, they can generate fear in the society which can suppress any resistance that is likely to come up. This reciprocity of social control and silencing are analysed using three case studies from France, India and Pakistan where Christianity, Hinduism and Islam are the major religions respectively. This paper also tries to draw similarities between the banning and silencing of authors in different contexts and in different time and space based on religious power structures. The following incidents which happened in the recent past have been taken up as a case study for the same purpose.

- 1) Charlie Hebdo Issue for profaning Prophet Mohammad.
- 2) Issue of Perumal Murugan regarding his book 'Madhorubagan',
- 3) Death of Pakistani human rights activist, Sabeen Mahmud

In France, blasphemy law came to an end with the progressive liberation of the Republic from the Catholic Church between 1789 and 1830. The principle of *laïcité* which means the separation of church and state, was enshrined in the 1905 law, and it became a part of the constitution in 1945. Under this law, the government and the representatives of all public administrations and services must refrain from any public display of religion and must be religion blind. At the same time private citizens and organizations have the freedom to practice and express the religion of their choice as they wish. However in the recent years, there has been a growing tendency towards a more stringent understanding of *laïcité* and is widely challenged by the representatives of all the major religions.

Freedom to practice one's religion is not that smooth in France in the case of a religious minority. The Islamic scarf controversy in France has gained wide attention. In 2004, France introduced the law on “secularity and conspicuous religious symbols in schools” that banned wearing visible religious symbols in French public primary and secondary schools (*New Statesman*). Restriction to express one's religion along with the presence of blasphemy makes the situation more problematic. Blasphemy for one section is freedom of expression for the other.

The satirical magazine has been the target of two severe terrorist attacks, first in 2011 and later in 2015. The terrorist attack on January 7th, 2015 killed 11 people and left 11 others injured in the building. It was in response to some of the controversial cartoons it published which involved the portrayal of Prophet Muhammad in it. Though images of Muhammad are not explicitly banned in the Quran, popular Islamic views have long opposed human images, especially those of prophets. Such views have gained ground among Islamic militant groups. At the same time, it is not a reason for non-Muslims to feel compelled by the same restrictions or fear retribution if they go ahead with picturing the Islam's founder. These two reasons lie at opposite poles, and a consensus is quite impossible. Islam is not the only target of this satirical magazine. Both Christianity and Judaism have been regularly mocked. Charlie Hebdo through its cartoons imposes its anti-religion and broadly anti-establishment character by defending its right to blasphemy. Considering the number of times Charlie Hebdo has been the topic of controversy for its blasphemous cartoons opens up debate on freedom of speech and expression.

Many newspapers around the globe condemned the killings of Muslims worldwide. Most Indian papers and journalists saw the incident as an attack on the freedom of expression. In India, *Mint* ran the photographs of copies of *Charlie Hebdo* on their cover but later apologized after receiving complaints from the readers. *The Hindu* also issued an apology after it printed a picture of some people holding copies of *Charlie Hebdo*.

Shia Islam's journal *Yalasarat Al-Hussein*, praised the shooting, saying, “[the cartoonists] met their legitimate justice, and congratulations to all Muslims.” There are plenty of examples of the mutually beneficial relationship between terrorist organizations and the media. This symbiosis is vicious and dangerous. Terrorists are primarily interested in the audience and emphasize that how the audience reaction is as important as the act itself. Along with winning the attention of the masses, they aim to publicize their political causes. (*Bilgen*)

According to Azeem Trivedi, Humour is a new sin. He says when one tries to break a myth, he is sure to offend someone. However, due to fear of offending someone one cannot refrain himself/herself from calling a wrong, a wrong. At the same time, publishing anything with malicious intent to offend religious sentiments cannot be accepted.

In France, the attack was by the religious extremists as retaliation for abusing the religious minority. Whereas in India, in the case of Perumal Murugan, it was a different story altogether. Perumal Murugan's freedom of speech and expression was questioned by the religious majority. "Perumal Murugan, the writer is dead. As he is no God, he is not going to resurrect himself. He also has no faith in rebirth. An ordinary teacher, he will live as P. Murugan. Leave him alone," these words on Facebook page marked the decision of the well-known writer in the Tamil language to give up writing forever.

In January 2015, after he was blamed of blasphemy in his novel *Madhurobhagan*, first published in 2010, he announced that he is giving up writing. It is a story of a poor, childless couple, and his wife. The wife, who wants to conceive, participates in an ancient Hindu chariot festival where, on one night, consensual sex between any man and woman is allowed. Murugan takes the reader through the oppression of caste and pathologies of a community that ripped the couple apart and destroyed their marriage. In his fictional account, Murugan refers to actual places and communities, thereby leading to widespread criticisms. However, Murugan clears that there is "no historical evidence" that such a mating ritual existed or not, and only oral stories about it were passed. Murugan points in the book that he found people who were referred to as "God-given child" and "god's child" during his research. He writes: "I had presumed that they were called so simply because they had been born after prayers to the God. But during my search I chanced upon the connection between the temple festival and god's children." (Murugan 243)

The portrayal of the historical traditions related to the noted Ardhanareeswarar Temple in Tiruchengode was the main focus of protests of the Hindu and caste-based outfits. The eponymous presiding deity is part-Shiva and part-Parvati, in one idol. The title of the book, 'Madhurobhagan', is the translation of the name of the deity (Ardha-naree-eswarar) and the English title, 'One Part Woman', is a reference to the deity's form. Copies of the book were burnt by the right-wing Hindu nationalist group Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS, National Volunteers' Organisation), which conveyed a warning message to his publishers and other writers. A parallel of it can be drawn from the novel *The Book Thief* by Australian author Markus Zusak. Language, reading and writing act as symbols of freedom and expression throughout the story. The novel features instances where the Nazi regime burns books that they thought were a threat against their political agendas. Any chance of a rise of a parallel discourse was destroyed by burning the books. The cultural vigilantes "have all too often bullied writers and publishers, attacking our fundamental rights and freedoms of speech and expression." (Biswas)

There were widespread protests among the fellow writers against the rising intolerance in the society. Sahitya Akademi Award winner Ashokamitran is of the opinion that people are very sensitive about issues of caste, religion and related problems and communities are becoming militant because of intolerance. Noted author and activist Meena Kandaswamy calls this as an attack on the freedom of expression that is a way in which the Hindu right wing wants to spread its politics of divide and hatred by polarising society. (*The News Minute*). People have become very dogmatic on religious and caste issues that they are ready to go to

any extreme to protect their caste and religion. They take up the duty of a protector of their culture. They, in fact, silence those who are questioning the dominant discourse.

Ban as a means to regulate national consciousness is a political practice in India. Right from the days of the British to the governments of various political organisations that ruled independent India for the past 68 years, all have exercised this option at different points of time. The "liberal" Nehru-era Congress regimes in the early years of Independence, the authoritarian Indira Gandhi regime in the 1970s, and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led governments in later years all were heavily influenced by groups and tendencies advocating cultural oppression and cleansing. India has a long history of banning books usually for allegedly offending religious and community sentiments, misrepresenting the country or perceived obscenity.

In both the cases, it was the religious extremism that ceased the freedom of speech and expression. In the case of peace activist Sabeen Mahmud in Pakistan, along with religion, state power is also responsible. Sabeen Mahmud who was a peace activist and founder of T2F from Pakistan, died from gunshot wounds. She was a dynamic woman of many talents and she was behind the creation of a digital platforms for arts and culture in Pakistan. The Second Floor (T2F) was her first major project in 2007 which was a part of her non-profit umbrella organization called Peace Niche. Sabeen Mahmud was also highly critical of totalitarian and radical Islamist movements and was a staunch defender of women's rights. Sabeen organised talks, exhibitions, discussions, pioneering events under T2F with prominent artists, writers and activists. Ms Mahmud passionately worked for it day and night from fundraising, marketing to building maintenance for these events at T2F.

Mahmud had been present at the opening of a discussion named "Unsilencing Balochistan,". Prominent Baloch rights activists Mama Qadeer, Farzana Majeed and Muhammad Ali Talpur had been a part of the discussion. Baluchistan is a restrictive province, where separatist insurgents have flourished for long, and the Pakistan army is currently engaged in battling them. T2f through 'Unsilencing Balochistan' focused on this situation and the plight of the people living there. Qadeer and Majeed have long championed the cause of Balochistan's "disappeared," a term used to describe people who have been abducted in Balochistan, whose bodies were often found years later. 'The Voice of Baloch Missing Persons organisation', which both activists belong to, says that around 2,825 people have "disappeared" in this way since 2005. (Hashim) Sabeen openly discussed the military's human rights abuses in the region and questioned the disappearance of activists.

They allege the disappearances, which are mostly of Baloch rights activists and students, have been carried out by the Pakistani government and its powerful ISI intelligence agency, a charge the agency denies. A similar talk with the same speakers at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), over a fortnight ago, was cancelled on orders from the government at the last minute, according to a LUMS statement. (Hashim). According to Journalist Mohammad Hanif, the Baluchistan problem is so huge, and Pakistani intelligence agencies are so paranoid, that they will not allow even discussion in a room full of people, let alone a TV channel or newspaper. However, at the same time misdirecting the murder to the army deflected the blame away from Deobandi terrorist groups¹ who target educationists and activists. (Taj)

Sabeen chose to fight, not to be silenced. She not only spoke out herself but also provided

¹Deobandi is a revivalist movement within Sunnism. It is centered in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, has recently spread to the United Kingdom, and has a presence in South Africa.

a space for other people to raise their voices. The whole debate on the controversial Balochistan was cut off, at least for some time by silencing her. A fear has been instilled among the people for not coming up with the issue again. Sabeen for being the voice of the voiceless was denied her freedom of speech and expression.

The above three cases happened in three different countries where Christianity, Hinduism and Islam are the major religions. Though all the three religions propagate tolerance, love and peace, in practice it becomes off repeated rhetoric. In all three cases, mindless activism led to hampering of free speech. Charlie Hebdo paid a heavy compensation for caricaturing the minority in an offensive manner. The decision of Perumal Murugan, to give up writing questions the tolerance of the society in front of the sharpened pen. Liberal, social activist Sabeen Mahmud who dreamt of creating an alternative to religious nationalism in Pakistan was shot dead.

Social control is prominent in all the three cases, by religious institutions. The religion took the form of alternative nationalism. In above three countries, silencing or hampering of free speech and expression was used as a means of social control. In above cases religion acts as a major form of Durkheim's conscience collective set of common beliefs, ideas and moral attitudes that operate as a unifying force within society. Thus, the constraining power of the conscience collective was increased through the religious cults. Institutions were essentially agencies of social control.

However, these forms of social control deny the fundamental right of freedom. Man's self-conscience succumbs to the notion of conscience collective. He is forced to act according to the concept of the society or the authority of power. It is the religious fundamentalism that controls the minds of the religious extremists where their thoughts are not liberated but chained by religion. They remain in the self-imposed immaturity. According to Emmanuel Kant, it is a way far from enlightenment. Freedom to think away from a dominant discourse is denied and thus any attempt for a parallel discourse is wiped out.

However, they are also the instances where the line between freedom of speech and defamation gets blurred. The noted author Paranjy Guha Thakurta is of the opinion that 'you can't have freedom of speech if people are not ready to be offended.' (*Hindustan Times*). So the society must rise from its immaturity of intolerance imposed by itself. In fact, the freedom to mock is crucial to any vibrant democracy. At the same time, the right to express often becomes a 'right to insult'. The line between these two are too thin. Concepts of 'power' and 'freedom of speech' are inter related and it cannot be detached from the culture and values of the time, and they need to be constantly questioned, cross examined and challenged for selectiveness or preconceptions.

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From Groves of North Malabar to International Festivals: A Study of the Impact of Colonization and Globalisation on Folk Art *Theyyam*

Abstract

Theyyam/Theyyattam/kaliyattam/Thira/Thirayyatam is the ritual art form that is practised for centuries in the land of North Malabar in Kerala. The art is primitive, indigenous, tribal, spiritual and mysterious in itself. It is never a theatrical art form. It has religious tinge associated to it and is practised in Kaavu (sacred groves), village temples and sometimes in ancestral homes.

The belief is that during Theyyam performance the performer undergoes a metamorphosis or transformation and he becomes the superhuman. Spirit worship, ancestor worship, hero worship, masathi worship, tree worship, animal worship, serpent worship, worship of goddesses of disease are part of the Theyyam ritual. Gods, goddesses, legendary heroes of past, deities, animal gods and inanimate beings are invoked during the performance and performer undergoes a trance or ecstasy where he himself becomes the deity. At this time he predicts things and has the power to bless or curse, nurture or nullify, protect or destroy. The performers are believed to be possessed by deities and are with immense powers.

Theyyam: An Art Form with Social, Ritual, Mythical Implications

“As the monsoon ends and the landscape glistens in the restful shades of emerald and sapphire, there bursts forth in the North Malabar region of Southern India, fiery forms of supernatural beings. Sporting extraordinarily ornate headdresses that sometimes rise several feet in the air and carrying flaming torches, these beings appear, move, leap, speak, and dance in front of shrines, altars and village homes. These are the Theyyam gods and goddesses—incarnating in fantastic forms that seem to transcend human imagination—and this is the famed Theyyam Festival of Kerala - a spectacular mix of indigenous music, pounding drums, dances, rites, rituals and tribal customs.”(Ramaa Bharadvaj, 2003)

Theyyam / Theyyattam / kaliyattam / Thira / Thirayyatam is the ritual art form that is practised for centuries in the land of North Malabar in Kerala. The art is primitive, indigenous, tribal, spiritual and mysterious in itself. It is never a theatrical art form. It has religious tinge associated to it and is practised in **Kaavu** (sacred groves), village temples and sometimes in ancestral homes.

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heroes of past, deities, animal gods and inanimate beings are invoked during the performance and performer undergoes a trance or ecstasy where he himself becomes the deity. At this time he predicts things and has the power to bless or curse, nurture or nullify, protect or destroy. The performers are believed to be possessed by deities and are with immense powers.

The Theyyam is practiced by lower castes, i.e. that class of society who is categorized as scheduled caste, scheduled tribes or untouchables. It is performed by communities of Vannan, Malayan, Velan, Mavilan, Pulayan, Koppalan, Cheravan, Chingathan, Mannuthan, Anjuthan, Pulayan, Pampathar, Paravan who are the downtrodden section of society. Each community is the sole custodian of a particular Theyyam. There are nearly 400 types of Theyyams. If gods and goddesses are invoked, then Theyyam will be held in **Kaavus** or Sacred groves. If ancestors are invoked, then Theyyam will be conducted in ancestral homes. It is generally conducted from October to May every year.

Weird head hoods that are about 22 feet high, colorful attires, body paintings with a blend of red, green and silver colors, leaf dress, breast plates, arm ornaments, bangles, garland makes it a spectacular blend. The accompaniment of songs and movements with powerful blend of drums (**cenda**), cymbals (**ilathalam**), double reed instrument (**kuzhal**) makes it even more tribal and indigenous in nature. It is a unique combination of dance, music and religious worship.

Term Theyyam is the corrupted form of Malayalam word *Daivam* meaning god. It is never a theatrical art form. It is performed in *Kaavus* and ancestral homes without curtains and stage. It is more of a form of worship. The performance may last for 12 to 24 hours. *Raktha chamundi*, *Kari chamundi*, *Muchilottu Bhagavathi*, *Wayanadu Kulaveni*, *Gulikan* and *Pottan* are a few among the numerous Theyyam deities. It is said that some of the deceased and supernatural beings made their presence felt in village groves and astronomical findings arrived at the conclusion that it is the will of dead and superhuman to appear as Theyyams. The performer with huge costume acted as body or medium of deity and deity spoke through him. They are hence prayed for well being and survival. In short this primitive art form which is mystic in nature runs in a spiritual circle.

Historical and Anthropological Significance.

Theyyam is the peculiar art form of North Malabar region of Kerala. It originated 2000 years back in the age old Dravidian culture. It began as a primitive, tribal art form but in course of time imbibed peculiarities of time and place and became an amalgam of culture down years. It has also played an important part in the evolution of Hindu religion from primitivism to present form.

The Theyyam is as old as human civilization itself. It is said to have its origin in Neolithic and Chalcolithic age itself. The human trait was then characterised by primitivism. This is seen in ancestor worship, tree worship, demon worship, spirit worship that is characteristic feature of Theyyam. Indus Valley Civilization age had the feature of worshipping mother goddess for fertility and prosperity. This is reflected in Theyyam as worshipping of *Bhagavathi* (mother goddesses) for well being and irradiation of diseases.

Later with the coming of Hinduism and Brahmanism into land, Shaktism, Vaishnavism and Shaivanism got inculcated into Theyyam. With the coming of Buddhism and Jainism

Theyyam cult was widened. The concept of fasting and absence of bloodshed in certain Theyyams were adopted from Jainism. There are Theyyams that represent Muslim heroic figures which includes Theyyams of *Ali chamundi*, *Bappirian*, *Ummachi* and *Ali theyyam*. This points to the advent of Islam and the synthesis brought out by Muslim communities in north Malabar.

The present North Malabar region was occupied by Chalukyas, Hoysalas, Tuluvas, Rashtrakutas, Kodavas, Tulus in Ancient and Medieval period and by Arabs, Persians, Portuguese, Dutch, French, British, Israel, China, South Canara, Mysore, Kodagu, Europe in modern times for trade and administration. Thus Hindus, Mappila Muslims, Jains, migrant Christians occupied North Malabar and all the traits of this various cultures is reflected in Theyyam.

Thus Theyyam which is the folk art of North Malabar has evolved down centuries and has historical and anthropological significance. It helps to study human traits centuries back and contributes much to history of that geographical area of Kerala. Theyyam has evolved imbibing traits of all cultures that occupied the land for centuries and has changed substantially to folk art of masses.

Sacred Groves in North Malabar.

“Unlike a botanical garden, where a wide range of trees and plants are collected and cultivated for the purpose of our education and enjoyment, the sacred groves are one method of expressing the gratitude of human families to the trees which sustain and support life under a given agro-ecological condition” (Dr. M. S. Swaminathan, 1952)

Theyyam festival is conducted in *kaavus* or sacred groves in North Malabar which is densely wooded. These groves have undisturbed nature. These are the places where human destruction hasn't peeped in and man is ought to protect it with reverence and awe. The belief associated with *kaavus* is that any form of destruction to its existence will lead to severe displeasure of the associated deity.

Sacred groves in North Malabar have existed from time immemorial. Densely wooded area with abundance of unique flora and fauna and perennial water sources in vicinity are its peculiar nature. They simply points to the age old system of water harvesting and sharing in a village. They had the implicit motives of soil and water conservation and preservation of biodiversity. They remain as the store house of rare and endangered species of animals, plants that are endemic, endangered and economically important. They feed living beings in summer and support agro ecosystems in the villages. They are a promised treasured land for future.

Scientific, economical, social and spiritual aspects are linked to sacred groves. Most important is the aura of sacredness that is associated. They simply mean the existence of something that is not yet fully understood in nature. Sacred grove myth points to the fact that man is the part of whole of nature, but that whole is imperfectly understood, hence should be treated with reverence. The myths associated with *kaavus* are that all living things are sacred manifestations and embodiment of eternal which is mysterious. So all living things including plants and animals should be bowed. Thus came the so called “irrational” practise of tree and animal worship. They kept the sacred nature undisturbed and virgin.

The Theyyam gods had their sacred groves or *kaavus* where they were performed.

Sometimes the gods are represented by trees like *Alstonia Scholaris*, *Hydnocarpus Pentandra*, *Holarrhena Antidysenterica*, *Mimusops Elengi*. They are considered as abode of ancestral spirits and deities. This simply pointed to the concept of oneness with eternal that the tribal people felt which was falsely comprehended by the moderns. Belief is that any violation to rules that bind the sanctity of the sacred groves are unpardonable sins that will invite the anger of deity by bringing epidemic disease, natural calamities, famine and suffering to the people. Spirits inhabiting *kaavus* are believed to manifest their displeasure in different ways and rites are performed to please them.

The Theyyam performer, who loses his physical identity during performance, identifies himself with deity. In this elevated state, he is supposed to have supernatural powers and he moves, speaks, heals and blesses devotees. The concept of *Aham Brahmasmi* s brought forth, i.e., *I am the Brahma* (god). It is the reinforcement of supreme in every self which later laid the foundation for Indian religions.

Though incorporated and imbibed qualities of text based dogmas of Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism, Theyyam maintained its nature oriented cults. The concept of sacred grove and evolving oneself to supreme shows the inseparable relation of man and nature that primitives indulged in.

Globalization as a Destroyer of Indigenous Culture.

While colonialism is a euphemism for British Monopoly, Globalisation is a euphemism for US imperialism. Both had in it a conflict between dichotomies of us and them; centre and periphery; global and local.

As a direct effect of globalization, exchange of arts too took place, where by the village cult of Theyyam is now presented as a theatrical performance in the West. It was a direct passage of local to global market. The problem of local being voiced and reflected in global scenario is that, different mediations are required for different social strata. In such a process, the motivations and perspectives of the people concerned may continue to differ according to their respective social and cultural interests. Above all the individual experience at a local, village level may include representations of a global value, which will give rise to specific complexities and tensions. In short an art form which specifically reflects regional issues may subject to a distortion when it is exhibited before a global scenario, inculcating taste and needs of an international market. In an attempt to make it appealing for an international audience the authenticity of the indigenous local is destroyed.

As per theorists everything becomes a work of imagination that is neither purely emancipatory nor entirely disciplined, but becomes a space of contestation where individuals and groups seek to annex the global into their own practices of the modern. In short cultural globalization has grown out of ideas about development, progress, former universalisms and modernity that provoked tensions about annexing the global into local groups and individual practices.

Theyyam: A Cult of Localities and for Localities

Theyyam art form is central to the religious and social life of people in Northern Malabar. They give meaning to daily life of its devotees and they play an important role in producing and reproducing locality itself—group of devotees, villages, castes, lineages—in the sense of

a structure of feeling developed under conditions of social wear and flux ,anxiety and entropy, ecological uncertainty and cosmic volatility, and the always present quirkiness of kinsmen, enemies, spirits and quarks of all sorts. Theyyams are in a way incarnation of localities at different social levels. In the passing of history, Theyyam met with contrasting responses from different outside observers, commentators and mediators, representing one form or other of the global.

Implication of Theyyam in the Eyes of Colonial Western Powers.

The Theyyam ceremony was first described in 1901 by Fred Fawcett, the then superintendent of government Railway Police, Madras. He was also the local correspondent of the Anthropological Institute of Ireland and Great Britain. He spent almost three and a half years in North Malabar and studied in depth the Theyyam ceremonies.

His writing proved his keen sense of observation and his constant pre occupation with accurate ethnographic details. But his writing about Theyyam and North Malabar shows a condescending attitude which is the characteristic feature of all the other writings of the enlightened Colonial West about East. Although he does not morally condemn the ceremonies there is a radical negation in his writings. He focuses less on the religious dimension of the ceremony and more on the irrationality of the practise. His writing gives a sense of weirdness, a word that he frequently uses to qualify the human race busy in religious effusion. This weirdness is attached, in his book, not only to aspect of divine beings of Theyyam, but also to the conduct of the people following irrational religious practices. He quotes Theyyam practise as almost entirely primitive in character. The weirdness and primitive character of Theyyam is described as a part of a worldwide phenomenon, which the coloniser alone can embrace in his global and rational eye. This would eventually assign to colonisers world exotic, curious and weird tales about East.

Apart from the anthem on primitive irrationality, Theyyam, according to west is represented as superstitious, a cynical exploitation of poor ignorant people, devoid of any morality and ethics. They also portray it as an obstacle to civilization and the very notion of progress.

This is only a survival of the most primitive animistic belief in religion which Hinduism does not desire to see any more. There is no art or anything of cultural value in this cult appealing to the modern mind. The practices adopted in this cult are hideous, monstrous, demonic and frightful when compared to the Bhakti cult of popular religion. Fear dominates in this cult and there is no place for love or personal devotion. Psychologically it does more harm than good to the worshippers (V.William, 1944).

Imbibing the ideas of a superior West who assumed the burden of global morality and forward movement of culture, there came elitist, educated Hindus. They contributed to irrationality of Theyyam coined by West.

Probably few nations in the world ancient or modern have been more superstitious, more credulous, and more gullible than the Hindus. It is a most significant and noteworthy fact that even at this distance of time, even in this budding 20th century, in an age of triumphant intellectual and

scientific advance unparalleled in the history of the human race, many things which have been burned to ashes under the all—embracing fire of modern science and thought are still piously retained by the vast majority of Hindus. It is a very sorry spectacle to witness the Hindus still worshipping the village gods and goddesses in the most hideous and superstitious manner (Kunhikannan K, 1912).

In short though Theyyam is a village cult, interpretation pertained to notions of globalization. It was wrapped in the attire of primitivism, the imagination, and irrationality. While Colonial West gave it a irrational tinge the global market get rid of its spiritual dimensions and the concept of cultural heritage of India in global market made it a show piece.

When Arts Gets Commodified in Global Village.

One of the main outcomes of globalization is the integration and homogenization of cultures. Homogenization of cultures is simply the loss of diversity of culture between two or more cultural group.

As a direct impact of globalization Theyyam found its stage in global market and the commoditization of Theyyam was the net result whereby Theyyam was turned into a mere show piece, detaching itself from its values associated. Culture becomes comprehensible only as a multiplicity of diverse culture. This idea of culture as a vital source of difference vanishes if it valued solely as a commodity. This is because art market privileges the taste and preferences of consumers, not the specific significance that the arts have in their original context. The major challenge that developing country face is the inadequacy of relevant cultural capacity to produce and circulate cultural goods and services in forms that can be readily consumed by developed countries.

The cultural industry instead of protecting the cultural diversity, encourage the marketing of art in a manner which distort its true nature and undermine its very purpose. They disregard the fact that culture holds emotional, spiritual, metaphysical, and symbolic meaning for its owners. The cultural industry package culture in such a way that they feed tastes, preferences, and pre conceptions in Europe, the United States and other mature market. The cultural object then take the form that can be appreciated by customer in developed countries. It then becomes legible to consumer and illegible to producer. It then emigrates from producer's universe of significance.

The languages and regions in India have a large stock of shared folk lore materials. Collections can be made of tales common to widely separated and distant regions of the sub continent. Yet these shared items may carry different meaning in different regions. This kind of variation in meaning is characteristic of cultural forms. You cannot predict meaning from forms, for the meaning of a sign is culturally and contextually assigned (Ramanujan, 1952).

Theyyam when stepped into a global market from shrines of North Malabar faced a serious threat to its regionality, culture, and significance associated. To make it a universally communicable art form, realistic western conventions were introduced which resulted in loss of its cultural meaning. It shed its regional dimensions.

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Power and Individuality in the Dystopias of 1984 and Hunger Games, a study based on Michel Foucault's *The Subject and Power*.

Abstract

While power holds together the dynamics of life, society, individual, and its every rhythm from degeneration and decay it is also responsible for the strained choices of all manifestation of individuality and freedom. In a different perspective the same power allows individual to turn into super personality for good or bad disseminating the ill effects of power into the society. Dystopias predominantly expose the power of the state or the super personality over individuality.

*The present study aims to examine individuality tarnished by power in two different periods of dystopian parallels under the critical context of Michel Foucault's *The Subject and Power*. Foucault in his theory visualizes the ideology for negating the existing conditioned individuality to endorse novel practices of subjectivity. The paper attempts a qualitative exploration into the application of Foucault's conclusions taking the case study of the selected dystopian works.*

Eradication of all forms of power is impossible and is quite an abstraction as the very existence of the state and the individual is on the exercise of power configurations. However discerning the dominating and totalitarian power for the sake of a substantial individual freedom and societal tranquility is the resultant of reasoning and rationality. The dystopian protagonist possesses this reasoning capacity but is challenged as the conceived principles of righteousness are hard to convince in the tumult and one has to turn into a revolutionary to compel the reality to the masses. But the revolution most of the times lack momentum and longevity, customarily forced to settle down, struggling with confrontational forces, surfaces as a compromised entity. Individuality therefore is an amalgam of characteristics and traits that are assimilated from the external flux of confrontational domains of power; and the state is the larger form of individualization universally thrust upon by the contours of power.

Keywords: Dystopia, Power, Individuality, State, Subject

Introduction

The term “utopia” was coined by Thomas More. The word means “nowhere place”. It describes a State where everything is perfect. A dystopia is just the opposite, a place where everything is imperfect, sometimes it pretends as good, or the only possible form of state. A dystopian state is ruled by a group who implement their propaganda through “telescreens” or “television”. The individual is subject to surveillance, manipulation and oppression.

George Orwell's *1984* is a novel published in 1949, warning the western countries, on the dangers of a totalitarian state. The fast spreading communism was being rapidly accepted or admired by the western world. Orwell, however, was not happy with what he has experienced

in communist nations, particularly, the way the totalitarian governments monitor and control their people. Orwell warns the world, how unpleasant it would be, in the immediate future, if communism continues to spread in other nations. *1984* tells the story, through Winston Smith, how he is monitored and controlled, and when he expresses his defiance to the “Party” how he is conditioned, by physical and mental torture, to be faithful to the state.

Suzanne Collins' *Hunger Games* depicts the struggle of poor districts of “Panem”. The tributes are selected through a lottery, a boy and a girl, in exchange for extra food and oil, the “tesserae”. A pair from each district is selected for hunting in the “arena”. The rich districts send their “career tributes”, who are physically strong, and are trained for hunting, for them it's an honour to partake in hunger games, but for the poor it is a death warrant. In Panem wealth is concentrated in the Capitol and a few districts; while most of the districts suffer from severe poverty. The novel presents the suffering of tributes in the “arena” as mass entertainment. The games are shown live, and discussions are being held in media on the progress of games. It parallels today's reality television, where people are turned into valuable commodities.

In this study an attempt is made to discuss the effect of power in dystopian setting, not only applying to the selected studies, but also aiming at a general analysis. For this Michel Foucault's *The Subject and Power* is taken as the critical context. Foucault extensively discusses the way power is exercised on a subject, the nature of power, and the power relationship.

The Individual and Dystopia

The individual of dystopian society is always in a labyrinth of manipulated, suppressing totalitarian state. George Orwell's *1984* was a warning against the fast spreading communist ideology embraced by nations worldwide in the mid twentieth century. Published in 1949 Orwell's futuristic novel is not only on the ill effects of communism; but upon an analysis of the second half of the twentieth century, it is equally a prophecy on the power of imperialism. The individual is doomed to the extent that even a critical thinking against the state incites punishment by “Thought Police”. Language is another tool to control the individual. The State introduces a new language, “Newspeak” to substitute English so as to minimize the use of words there by limiting the process of thought itself. Winston Smith, the main character works in the “Ministry of Truth” where history is being distorted to suit the totalitarian state thereby denying the truth permanently for the forthcoming generations.

In *Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins, the individual is a non-entity where the basic needs of food and safety is scant less think about self-esteem. *Hunger Games* is a saga of 75 years of apocalyptic torture and suppression, the human hunting in the 'arena' is a reminder of gladiator games which has its prototypes in history. The tributes of poor districts are in stark contrast with career tributes from rich districts, who take to contesting in games as a matter of honour and privilege. The novel mocks on the present day reality television, drifted from reality, flimsy in its objective and ignorant about the primitive element in it.

The plight of the individual is to exist without making the question “what are we in this very moment?” (Foucault 785) Individual is denied his right to have access to truth, isolated from history, manipulated by propaganda and subject to the dystopian matrix. Individual

seldom questions the State and when it does, the defiance turns to incur psychological and physical bruises hard to bear.

Power and Communication in Dystopia

Communication is another way of acting upon persons. Communication asserts, reiterates, manipulates, and exploits, meaning and context to exert power on individual and society. The telescreen in *1984* “blasts” the state propaganda to manipulate and to mask the deeds of the Party. The telescreen propagates the ideologies of Party, regularly, as required to keep its citizen's under “sedation”. It picks up voices, monitors, and identifies even a tiny facial twitch as a symptom of sedition. Long hours of work, insufficient provisions, urban decay, and disillusionment make citizens incapable of questioning; life is more a compromise for troubles of physical well being and gratifying hunger. Anyone who questions the totalitarian state is physically and mentally tortured by sending to the “Ministry of Love” to get “reeducated”; or, are given more “hunger games” to survive. The torture carries a harsh message for individual to conclude; it is better to be conditioned under the state. In *1984* the names of ministries communicates irony; “Ministry of Truth” distorts history, “Ministry of Plenty” ensures economic shortages, “Ministry of Truth” wages war, “Ministry of Love” is Party's centre of torture and punishment.

Hunger Games articulate in the most resounding manner how individual is at the mercy of the state. Hunger imposed on the districts is a lethal weapon in the hands of Capitol. Hunger Games poses a grave question on the bearing of the reality television. People are brought from different parts of the world, put to test in studio labs to analyze human behaviour and talents, before the miniature forms of dictator judges.

In all dystopian settings people articulate their defiance, but the state has its agenda to turn down the acts of defiance by the likes of Winston Smith and Katniss Everdeen. The present era gives unruly significance to communication. A dancer is not to dance alone, but is expected to communicate the extra talent. Earlier communication was relevant for religious leaders, politicians, lawyers, but that has changed, communication is everything, it is more powerful than ever. Katniss communicates through pretension, appearances, deception, and hunting, for all this, she undergoes grooming, a current terminology for manipulation and conditioning, which Winston Smith was subjected to during his encounter with O'Brien, resulting in his absolute submission to the totalitarian state.

Power and Freedom

Individual freedom is an abstract, elusive idea. Quite often individual never seeks freedom because the institutions of power have assured it in the form of a forgotten constitution undergoing regular amendments, rules and regulations, institutional code of conduct and the likes. Individual seldom comes out to question authorities and when they dare, the counter is disheartening, “You are claiming the right to be unhappy” (Huxley 240). The constant surveillance by the state is for the security of its properties, to have a close watch on its discipline; not for the easily replaceable man power; equally it is an intrusion into people's privacy. One is not an individual but an element of “public”. As a “public”, state

demands a refined, decent behaviour before the camera. State declares 'freedom of speech' but the public utterances are taken as anti-state testimonials. But those who are champions in communication misuse their power to dictate on the oppressed. Ultimately for the devastated individual, state advocates 'power of tolerance' to get satisfied with the rationed freedom.

Institutions of Power

Power is bestowed on individual mostly through “state apparatuses”. These apparatuses are potent to reach out to each individual's way of life, thinking, ideology, and belief; determines his needs; satisfies his earnest demands. In Orwell's *1984* state apparatuses were quite strong and individual was a victim of excessive state power. In the present century state apparatuses has undergone evolution to have more varieties of power manifestations. It's an era of world apparatuses; media, networking, social media, unprecedented technology, knowledge etc. which, over powered the earlier state apparatuses. The scope of apparatuses has widened; again freedom is better assured, individual feels at liberty, lazy, entertained, a freelancer in thinking and expression. But the propaganda has also gone through an evolution only; it is sophisticated in the hands of minorities; the government, the billionaires, the corporate, the multinationals, the service providers, the agents of globalization and liberalization. The effects of power are now at multiple levels; it is no longer homogeneous.

After the advent of globalization and liberalization, media emerged as a new state apparatus. Entertainment, information, knowledge, education, politics, economics, world affairs all are at the exposure of common man. The third world countries boast of better life conditions; unaware of the power of west. All the power agencies have a common “basic nature”. All power forms sustains as a willingly accepted norm, not being questioned, as the sole possible end. Power originates from individuals who form or shape the state apparatus. Every institution stands for the individual theoretically, while biased for collective groups; manifests as regulations which individuals willingly accept and promote themselves.

Power is implemented through consensus. The individual undergoes an internal conditioning, evolved and induced by the premises, compromises with manipulation and oppression of the state. Power is characterized by its actions, the repetition of ritualistic actions –“hate week”, “hunger games”. Actions reinforce, disproportionate, victimizes the external and internal flux of dystopia in individual. Power duplicates itself, multiplies by ignorance, take anxious modes in different contexts by the actions of individual or state evolves itself as the world order. Power acts by the use of obvious or hidden aggression, “obtaining the consent” for implementation, forms the condition to oppress subjects.

Subject

Individual is a subject in its conception itself; subject to parents, brutality, circumstances, and dynamics of nature. However subject can never claim objectivity; the very idea of it is absurd, subjectivity is thrust upon in its varying degrees. “There are two meanings of the word subject: subject to someone else by control and dependence; and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge. Both meanings suggest a form of power which subjugates and makes subject to”. (Foucault 781) Salvation of the subject in the state is next to

impossible neither capable to identify the suppressing forms of power nor discerning the power of the individual. The voice of the individual is usually silenced. Winston Smith offers a remote defiance to the state but is physically and mentally tortured in “Ministry of Truth” till he accepts “Big Brother”. “Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free”. (Foucault 790) The free subject is the one who reason the power forms dominating on him and his areas of intervention.

As long as the subject fails to understand the suffocating power of the state, he offers no confrontation. But when even the basic needs are denied; when it becomes an everyday struggle, the society develops a collective consensus of concern against authorities which leads to disorganized revolution supported by philosophical institutions. The revolution as in it seeks ideology for existence; and state usually takes a double stand, ignoring the revolution, pretend everything is fine, at the same time identifies the fissure in the revolution, to crack down the very structure of revolution.

The revolutionists are manipulated like Winston Smith to accept the propaganda of the state. An example would be how individuals fall in hands of religious institutions on assurance of deliverance in the other world and creates a pseudo atmosphere of worldly pleasures. Conventional religions has nothing new to offer, when new institutions develop within or outside, to form new groups of power; offers a better organization of the self, society, charismatic way of worship, camaraderie, financial support, sponsorship, worldly pleasures, all in the pretext of an assured berth in the other world.

Power and Internal Dystopia

The most dangerous form of power in dystopia is the one that leads to internal dystopia. Individual imbibes his own conditions for life, existence and survival out of misconception, ignorance, fear and dependence. The power of nations, regimes, religions, political parties, customs, manners and various state apparatuses influence individual to develop his own form of subjectivity. An example would be how a party worker of a political party blindly follows its doctrines and propagates it to his immediate surroundings.

Internal dystopia is an apparent answer to many common queries. How an extremist take an extreme stand? How leaders dictate terms for subjects? How dependence on nature has lead to its worship? How faiths on philosophers or ideologists tend to their worship? How ignorance misleads masses or generations? How fear enslaves? How individuals are classified on the basis of production and consumption? How wives are enslaved to husbands? How children are at the mercy of parents and elders? How people believe on imaginary powers to initiate customs and religions? How one fall prey to his physical and mental weaknesses? How in institutions a subject embraces regulations and in turn questions those who violate them? Internal dystopia is a conditioning of the individual by the individual upon submission to various state apparatuses.

In *1984* and *Hunger Games*, the subjects are under the pity of the state and they are not very clear about how history has turned around to form such conditions of subjectivity. However, the subjects continue their submission, for their wellbeing! To discern internal dystopia, a qualitative introspection into history and ideology has to be done. Many a times

this assignment is carried out by the collective conscience of enlightened individuals who are furious to shed their subjectivity.

Power and State

“...since the sixteenth century, a new form of power has been continuously developing. This political structure, as everyone knows, is the state. But most of the time, the state is envisioned as a kind of political power which ignores individuals, looking at the interest of the totality or, I should say, of a class or a group among the citizens”(Foucault 782).

Even before the introduction of state, nations and religions; man lived in groups under its leaders; tribes under tribal heads, nomads under a group leader; if we take example of Exodus from Bible the “chosen people” set out to their “promised land” under the lead of prophets. Considering the example of animals in forests some species live in groups and some live in isolation. Animals in groups help one another in the unified search for food, water, safety and comfort, while the isolated ones wander in their territory. But once a species outnumber others affecting nature's equilibrium, power factors may evolve for existence and survival; and subjects naturally has to fall in line.

State was formed for the individual but executed the interests of totality. As Foucault states the power of the State is a “tricky combination” of “individualization techniques” and “totalization procedures” (Foucault 782). The state provides physical comfort and promotes opportunities for spiritual wellbeing. It provides education, healthcare, security, employment, money, entertainment and leisure; but it also counts its subjects, measures the quantity of production, regulates consumption, intervenes in every action, and questions every decision. Power in a state is not an outcome of relations between its individuals but is a consequence of chain of actions, which determines citizenship rights, dictates the state's law, enforces values and culture, executes its propaganda and quantifies the production of subjects.

The Capitol citizens in Hunger Games and inner party members in 1984 lead a luxurious life hard to imagine for its subjects. The Capitol annually holds the hunger games as a ritual to remind the districts the brutality of their submission and to revenge the 75 year old uprising. Districts are kept concentrated behind barbed wires. The “peacekeepers” and “thought police” make sure of individual's submission.

The Power of “Power”

Individual shall enjoy his liberty and may allow others to have their freedom; and state shall remain, an accentuating structure to keep the individuals in harmony. Having discussed in detail the ill effects of power, it is also not to be overlooked that a society without power is an “abstraction”. Power shall exist for a bonding in society but the individual shouldn't be bound to the society. The disparity in, power of the individual and power of state has to be even. Man should not be tied to the state, it shall not dictate, defy, or destroy individuality.

Power is constructive when it ensures, enables, holds together; it is destructive when it dictates, regulates, manipulates. Taking an example would be the ironic stance of democratic government; how people are said to be powerful in democracy and how pathetic is their

submission to the state. The submission of individual is universal in all forms of government. What we need is a change in definition of power. In dystopias, power is concentrated in the hands of totalitarian state, but that has to change, individual should have a major share of power than the state. The power of state has to subside for better individuality.

Conclusion

1984 and *Hunger Games* depict the predicament of common man in two time periods; the socio-political setting during the two world wars and the early 21st century. The dystopian literature best portrays the struggle of individual against the state; and against all kinds of state apparatuses. The real struggle of man, as we realize is for his basic needs, which one fails to recognize in the physical world of comfort. Spirituality and religion has no say in dystopian society where it is more realistic about the real.

In the present form of state, individual has little scope of space. Power equations in the state are deeply embedded in the individual, blinding him from the real joy, of individuality. It needs a lot more enlightenment in the society to transform it from a state centered power to individual centered power. The exchange of power from the state to the individual is not easy for different reasons. The huge population, diminishing spaces, fast depleting resources, unprecedented growth of science and technology, omnipresent power structures, mighty state apparatuses, all are impediments in the path of “salvation” of the individual in the physical world.

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Power and Politics in George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire Series*

Abstract

In any society, there is politics and “the political process is the shaping, distribution, and exercise of power....What men seek in their political negotiations is power” (Lasswell 75). This paper examines the power and its relation to politics in an epic series A Song of Ice and Fire, written by George R. R. Martin, a renowned American novelist. Martin's use of power in politics is dealt with from various perspectives and in different depths of meanings. Power and politics are so intertwined that they are found inseparable in any society. This paper presents various definitions of power put forth by many theorists such as Machiavelli, Hobbes, Marx, and Foucault in line with Martin's use of power in the series. This paper analyses how the ruling class as well as the working class exercise power in the light of political developments that take place in the world of Westeros. In A Song of Ice and Fire Series, the Seven Kingdoms are at war with one another, each of them claiming their right to the throne. The characters who are already in power, on the one hand, desire to gain more power in order to enjoy the benefits of higher social position. On the other hand, there are power mongers such as Petyr Baelish and Varys who belong to the working class. They try to achieve power in their own way in order to be a part of the ruling class. Money plays a vital role in politics and this paper also focuses on one of the motivating factors for the insatiable quest for power, that is, wealth. And the people involved in this quest for power are those who have authority or influence and those who do not have. Women take part in politics by choice/force helps settle amicably the socio-political issues. The power and politics are examined at different levels in the context of political upheavals that determine the fate of the Seven Kingdoms in A Song of Ice and Fire Series.

The Chambers Dictionary defines the term power as “the skill, physical ability, opportunity or authority to do something; control or influence exercised over others” (1217). Power has always remained with a few, and so naturally the majority have felt powerless. Dahl has stated that “some people have more power than others is one of the most palpable facts of human existence. Because of this, the concept of power is as ancient and ubiquitous as any that social theory can boast” (201). Power is possessed by an individual or a small group or a community and its various dimensions are physical, intellectual, moral, and the like. An individual in any society tries to exercise power over another individual or a group of people in order to control or influence them. Power is an inevitable element in any society.

The study of power can be traced back to the days of Machiavelli, and according to him, “power is exercised over others and society constituted through the domination of the weak by the strong” (Haugaard 2). Then it was developed through the extant writings of Michel Foucault and many theorists such as Hobbes, Steve Lukes, Karl Marx, Weber, and Hannah Arendt and the different schools of thought of these writers also have contributed to the development of power theory. To Hobbes, “society is the sum of individuals who carry and

constitute power” (2). According to Marx, power is held in the domination of social classes and systems where people control the means of production (Giddens 5). Marxism “insists on studying power and politics in the operation of the specific mode of production/ social formation in which it exists and is exercised” (Nigam 8). Foucault views power from various perspectives. He claims that “Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere... power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society” (93). Martin to a certain extent adheres to parts of these definitions of power in his work *A Song of Ice and Fire* series.

Foucault argues that power is manifested in itself and through social system, because it is not something that can be shared or seized or politically restricted. He claims that power is “multi-directional” and is ubiquitous as it can be seen in familial relationships, social relationships, economic relationships, and political relationships. Foucault deals with power in relation to struggle and resistance both in the social system and in an individual. In his works one can notice that power is more diffused rather than concentrated, expressed in action rather than possessed by a class or group.

Foucault has stated that power is multi-directional; one of the most important dimensions of power is its role in politics. In any society, there is politics and “the political process is the shaping, distribution, and exercise of power... what men seek in their political negotiations is power” (Lasswell 75). To study power, an understanding of the terms *influence* and *authority* is essential: influence implies the act of informal procedures often involving persuasion, whereas authority implies power vested in an official capacity and orders that are carried out through formal channels. A study of George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* series with respect to the relation between power and politics has been attempted in this paper.

George Raymond Richard Martin is a renowned contemporary American novelist. His well-known work, *A Song of Ice and Fire* (1996-2011), is an epic series which consists of five books: *A Game of Thrones* (1996), *A Clash of Kings* (1999), *A Storm of Swords* (2000), *A Feast for Crows* (2005), and *A Dance with Dragons* (2011). George R. R. Martin is a six-time winner of the Locus Award, and he has also published several novels, short stories, novellas, and novelettes which have won many honours such as Hugo Award, Nebula Award, and World Fantasy Award.

In George R. R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* series, politics plays an important role. It is so demanding and consuming that the entire series revolves around characters fighting over the Iron throne and their quest for power plays a decisive role in the social structure as well as in the personal self. Where there is power there exists powerlessness, and because of this disparity, a confrontation between those in power and those who are not is inevitable. Power and politics are so interrelated that they are found inseparable in any society.

Martin in his work through his characters puts forth a question: Who really does hold power? For instance, Lord Varys sees power as a “curious thing” (Martin 1998: 119) since the true power holder of the realm is unknown. He puts a riddle to Lord Tyrion and in answer to that Tyrion recollects the question and tries to answer as follows:

The king, the priest, the rich man—who lives and who dies? Who will the swordsman obey?... All depends on the man with the sword.... That piece of steel is the power of life and death.... yet if it is the swordsmen who rule us in

truth, why do we pretend our kings hold the power?.... Some say knowledge is power. Some tell us that all power comes from the gods. Others say it derives from law. Yet that day on the sept of Baelor's sept, our godly High Septon and the lawful Queen Regent and your ever-so-knowledgeable servant were as powerless as any cobbler or cooper in the crowd. (Martin 1998:119-120)

In *A Song of Ice and Fire* Series, there has never been an equal distribution of power. The ruling class and the common folk have power that they wield it to either exert dominance over one another or simply use it as a means of survival. Each character within the ruling class always tries to attain a position higher than others that leads to conflict and riot between different houses and mostly resulting in war. In the series, Robert becomes the king of the Seven Kingdoms and takes up his place in the Iron throne after overthrowing the Targaryen mad king by defeating him in a combat. The transfer of power from one dynasty to the others is quite evident from the above mentioned instance where the entire Targaryen house is reduced to mere fragments and thus House Baratheon comes to prominence. As mentioned earlier, Foucault clearly states that political power cannot be restricted. This unrestricted manifestation of power is evident from the fact that it is not only Robert Baratheon, but also all the people who are associated with him and his family, get involved and they achieve new heights of power and glory after Robert becomes a king. However, power does not reside in a particular individual or a group, as it is unstable. The peaceful Seven Kingdoms are soon at war with one another, and each one of them has claimed the right to the Iron throne after the unexpected and untimely death of Robert Baratheon. The Starks fight the Lannisters, and the Baratheons fight among themselves to rule over the Seven Kingdoms. When the civil war is unsettling in the landscape of Kings Landing, another political upheaval is brewing in the land of Mereen. Daenerys Targaryen, another heir of the ruling class, an army of unsullied in Mereen and exerts her right to the throne because she is of the belief that she is the rightful heir to the throne after the rule of her father; King Aegon, the mad king. A few notable people in the ruling class have left a mark by exercising their power at hand.

Lord Tywin Lannister tries to exercise his power through his daughter Cersei who has married King Robert Baratheon. After the demise of Robert, the kingdom is ruled by his son Joffrey, but in reality it is Tywin who exercises his power and rules the kingdom. Tywin's political acumen and his ability to discern how any situation would turn out are known to everyone in the Seven Kingdoms. He exercises an authoritative power over those who do not do his bidding. Tywin manages to run his familial affairs and the kingdom's concerns with fairness and he carries himself with authority and he has never been condescended before anyone. In *A Song of Ice and Fire* series, Cersei reminisces how Lord Tywin had trained her brother Jaime in the art of wielding power effectively. "You cannot eat love, nor buy a horse with it, nor warm your halls on a cold night," (Martin 2005: 102). He was instrumental in bringing the Lannisters to the limelight.

In this series, there are power mongers who belong to the working class; they try to achieve power in their own way in order to be part of the ruling class. Their achievement of glory is often tainted with deception and selfish acts which they indulge in either for survival or as part of life. However, a very few characters who belong to the working class have secured themselves a place among the kings and the nobles. Some characters effectively use power to manipulate others in order to achieve a status which enables them to rule than to be ruled.

Lord Petyr Baelish also known as the Master of Coin in the Kings Landing, one of the advisers in the King's Small Council, was originally a common man with no family name or wealth behind him to support him. He has managed to exert his influence in the politics of the Seven Kingdoms through his cunning and evasive ways. These ways also ensure him a place in the Small Council. Petyr Baelish is believed not to be a threat for anyone in the war affairs as "he had no banners to call, no army of retainers, no great stronghold, no holdings to speak of, no prospects of a great marriage" (Martin 1998: 248). Even without an army or a family name to protect him, he is able to accumulate so much wealth and position through his deceiving and self-centered nature. What other characters fail to notice is that he also plots and plans well in advance to secure his place in the kingdom by making deals and bargaining his ways out of any situation. Baelish uses power in a persuasive way that even leads to a political shift in the political situations of Westeros.

Lord Varys is a minor character who is well-known as the master of whisperers. Though very little is known about his past, it is said that he has ears in every corner of the kingdom. He exerts immense power among people and he maintains his position in the Small Council and also in the political scene by knowing almost every secret of anyone. Varys, while discussing power with Tyrion Lannister, says that "I resolved to live. I begged, I stole ... I was as good a thief as any in Myr, and when I was older I learned that often the contents of a man's letters are more valuable than the contents of his purse" (Martin 1998: 584). This gives him a strategic upper hand over everyone else. Though he does not crave for the Iron Throne, he supports the characters in the realm who hold power legitimately or illegitimately just by being loyal to the realm. Varys does not become an ally with anyone; he just performs his duty as he was doing to the previous two kings Aerys II Targaryen and Robert Baratheon; now he serves King Joffrey. One could say that Varys understands power more than any other character in *A Song of Ice and Fire* series. Varys believes that "power resides where men believe it resides. No more and no less" and also depicts power as a "shadow on the wall... shadows can kill. And oftimes a very small man can cast a very large shadow" (120).

The Iron Throne being the center of the political scene and the target for all the class around Westeros, it becomes a target for every character's ambition and political aspiration. The status of an ultimate seat of power is given to the Iron Throne and the character's actions revolve around the seat of power.

The ways of exerting power for political means are multi-dimensional. Firstly, wealth plays a major role in shaping a country's economy, and it dictates and determines the person who holds the power. Money or Coin as stated in the *A Song of Ice and Fire* series is a prime force through which power is operational in Westeros. The dynamics of politics tends to shift based on the influence of money. Tyrion mentions that "A coin is as dangerous as a sword in the wrong hands" (Martin 2000: 264), and he warns others about Lord Peter Baelish and his treacherous ways of manipulation and, moreover, Tyrion tells the Queen that Baelish is using money as a means. As it is the case with any government, ruling a nation requires lot of capital, and borrowing and lending money and this is also true with the kingdom in this series. There are various instances where money plays a vital role in shaping the policies that govern Westeros. Managing an empire requires a huge amount of money and people who have more money are able to sustain their place in the political scene. For instance, the Lannisters have wealth so much in surplus that the realm is in debt to them. In the first novel of the series, when Ned Stark attends his first Small Council meeting in King's Landing, he is shocked to

learn that the Iron Throne is in debt and half of it owed the Lannisters.

Tywin also sticks to the timeless tradition of marrying his children into a wealthy kingdom in order to uphold a higher societal status. He practically forces his daughter Cersei to marry Ser Loras Tyrell for wealth who was also forced once to marry King Robert for power. In the series, Jaime says that “You need Tyrell, but not here. Ask him to capture Storm's End for Tommen. (Martin 2005: 202). For political reasons the Lannisters use marriage as a bond between them and Tyrells. Though the Lannisters are portrayed as a wealthy house, running a kingdom and paying off people to keep their frivolous activities in silence, they take a toll in their treasury. Now to provide grains to the people in the city, they ask for help from the House Tyrell as they are rich by forming a political alliance and as a result of the possession of wealth the power dynamics shifts from the Lannisters to the Tyrells.

In any system of governance politics plays a vital role. Without effective politics, there will not be effective governance and the system might crumble and the society fails to function effectively. The stability of a society depends on a diligent use of resources, an efficient use of capital, and a skillful maintenance of production and supply chain. Taking this into account, the person who holds much power in any society might be able to alter the economy and thereby provide a stable political scene. In the later part of the series, Daenerys rules the eastern city of Meereen and she refines her skill as a ruler. Knights, sell swords and many others pledge loyalty to her. Tyrion Lannister who is in exile after the murder of his father travels to Valyria with Illyrio, where he finds out that Prince Aegon, son of Rhaegar is alive and offers him the following advice:

If I were you? I would go west instead of east. Land in Dorne and raise my banners. The Seven Kingdoms will never be more ripe for conquest than they are right now. A boy king sits the Iron Throne. The north is in chaos, the riverlands a devastation, a rebel holds Storm's End and Dragonstone. When winter comes, the realm will starve. And who remains to deal with all of this, who rules the little king who rules the Seven Kingdoms? (Martin 2011: 434)

Politics and power are held by people who take intellectual decisions and plan their moves well in advance just like a game of chess. When careful and planned moves are not made, it results in chaos and conflict. When Prince Aegon makes a bold yet wrong move, Tyrion says, “I would not do that if I were you. It is a mistake to bring your dragon out too (Martin 2011: 432). He stresses the diligence which is required to play the game of politics and sustain the power vested in them.

In *A Song of Ice and Fire* series, Martin writes about a civilisation which is on the brink of collapse. And he depicts how politics and power go hand in hand to create a dystopian society and not a utopian society. The nexus between power and politics that Martin deals with in the series is relevant to the present age. However, the individualistic goals and greed result in the demise of peace and economic stability in the society. In a conversation between Queen Daenerys and Ser Jorah in *A Song of Ice and Fire* series, Daenerys opines that people want a powerful and enlightened ruler to give them peace and prosperity. And Ser Jorah replies quite elegantly that “the common people pray for rain, healthy children, and a summer that never ends, It is no matter to them if the high lords play their game of thrones, so long as they are left in peace... They never are.” (Martin 1996: 226)

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Textual Space Representing History, Politics, Identity and Resistance in J. M. Coetzee's *Life and Times of Michael K.*

Abstract

J. M. Coetzee's celebrated novel Life and Times of Michael K. is read in the paper as a postmodern representation of 'times', the conjecture of metafictional time and space, the space more of a textual conjuring, giving birth to identities, that refer to and defer with the historical narration. This paper here examines Coetzee's representation of Michael K. as a subject who is part of the narrative and at the same time the one who eludes the narratives of time. Coetzee places Michael K. in the backdrop of times disturbed by civil war and apartheid, in a colonial regime, where power acts in its most hideous manner upon the subjugated and the discriminated. But Michael K. is evasive and eludes the structures that prompt an identity under control by resisting interpretations of his life and story, thereby resisting any 'meaningful' 'plays' of power upon him. He withdraws from the political acts of oppression upon him by being silent at its face and creating his own modus operandi, as an identity always in flux when placed along with the conventional power structures.

The paper tries to scrutinize the novel from a post-structuralist point, its treatment of history, politics and identity, by taking into consideration the text as a meta-historic source, and the treatment of Michael K.'s identity in this political complexity one that exhibits Derridiantextuality. In other words the correlation of the elusiveness of textual meaning and that of Michael K.'s as a resistance to the acts of power to subjugate by understanding, is analyzed and how the representational textual space becomes charged with such complexities and aesthetics of resistance towards assumptions and interpretations is examined in this paper. The wider implications of ecopolitical and spacio-political dynamics as represented in text are discussed by applying the theories of Henri Lefebvre and Michel Foucault.

J.M. Coetzee's seminal work *Life and Times of Michael K* (1983) depicts the life and struggles of a simple, black South African during perturbed times of civil war and apartheid. Michael K was born "hare lipped" (Coetzee 4) to a working class woman Anna K, whose first reaction to the child was revulsion because of its appearance. He then went to HuisNorenus, a special institute for "variously afflicted and unfortunate children" (Coetzee 4) and then worked as a gardener for the municipal services, city of Cape Town. When his mother becomes ill and wishes to leave the town and move to the country, Prince Albert, where she was born and grew up, Michael K quits the job and takes up the pursuit. Although faced with a lot of hardships (the permit that doesn't arrive, stopped by soldiers on the road) he hits the road with his mother in a hand pulled cart. But on the way, Anna's health worsens and she dies in a hospital near Stellenbosch. After loitering for a while, he leaves Stellenbosch for the farm in

Prince Albert, carrying his mother's ashes. In between he is forced to work in a railway track, but continues the journey to reach a farm in Prince Albert that resembled his mother's description.

Michael K buries his mother's ashes and lives a subsistent life in the abandoned farm for a while when the arrival of a grandson of the owners of the farm, disturbs his existence. He then retreats to the mountains, where coming down malnourished and pathetic, he is picked by policemen and is sent to a labor camp in Jakkalsdrif. He escapes from the camp and goes back to the Visagie (the name of the owners of the farm) farm and starts to cultivate melons and pumpkins. He encounters a group of revolutionaries in hiding but stays mute. His stay in his burrow is disturbed again by the soldiers in pursuit of the revolutionaries and is taken by them to a rehabilitation camp, accusing him of assisting the rebels and then destroying his cultivation.

K's brief stay at the Kenilworth camp is depicted by a medical officer's narration in the second part of the novel. The officer's inquiries to find an identity and meaning are dispelled by K's silence. He escapes from the camp and goes to Cape Town where he meets some nomads but is disillusioned by their way of life. The novel ends with K's poetic vision of his return to the Visagie farm where he plans his minimalistic existence with the "little old man" (Coetzee 138) who is residing in his mother's apartment.

Coetzee's concept of the novel is that one which stands as a 'rival' against history, not the one which 'supplements.' Rejecting the aspect of submitting to the historical grand narratives that are pointed and structured by power, Coetzee suggests a text which stands in the space built by itself, which is capable of transcending discourses that act as historical foundations. In a talk given in 1987, 'The Novel Today', he says: "in times of intense ideological pressure like the present, when the space in which the novel and history normally coexist like two cows on the same pasture, each minding its own business, is squeezed to almost nothing, the novel, it seems to me, has only two options: supplementarity or rivalry" (qtd. in Dominic Head, 10-11). Such novels, at the same time alluding to history, would resist the dialectics of historical inseminations, thereby demythologizing it. Coetzee elaborates: "a novel that operates in terms of its own procedures and issues in its own conclusions, not one that operates in terms of the procedures of history and eventuates in conclusions that are checkable by history". He evokes a sense of 'magical autonomy' in the texts that deconstruct historical metanarratives and stand aloof in the process of historical representation. The idea of authors who produce transcending discourses (as suggested by Foucault in his essay, 'What is an author') is put to practice by Coetzee in his novels that represent contexts and characters which allude to and at the same time withdraws from the historical specificity, thereby creating a discursive textual space. The paper intends to study such a space as represented in the Booker winning novel, *Life and Times of Michael K*.

Coetzee's novels are noted for their strong anti-realism, the ones that purposely reject the colonial realist myths: historically written and purported. Therefore he has been categorized as a postcolonial novelist, one who makes use of poststructuralist (for post structuralism's methods to sabotage the center) strategies to decenter and decolonize textual discourses. Even then, the texts Coetzee created were more complex and radical for their categorizations. They didn't just invoke the counter narratives but also brought in narratives that undermined such counter narratives. Such elusiveness and anti-realism created a lot of critics for Coetzee including his fellow South African writer Nadine Gordimer, who in her famous review of

Michael K ("The Idea of Gardening"), invokes Lukacsian concept of prescriptive realism, that's closer to the historic representation. She criticizes Coetzee for not considering the victimizations of apartheid revolutive in the novel, but on other hand Coetzee "does not recognize what the victims, seeing themselves as victims no longer, have done, are doing, and believe they must do for themselves". She dispraises Coetzee for portraying elusiveness and passivity at the face of revolution and bringing up a different kind of narrative that's complex and anti-realist, that seems to denounce the revolutionary ideal. But on the other hand, Coetzee's idea of art is one that exhibits independent resistance by not supplanting historical discourses.

Situating Coetzee himself in the historical time and space of South Africa was problematic and engendered complex identity issues. Coetzee resides in a marginal space of a white South African, who is neither Afrikaner, no more English(the disheveled colonial roots); whose cultural and linguistic identity is split in between the two dominant modes of existence. The problems derive from the conjugation of various historical facets that determined the course of the national politics. The nationalist movements against the British in 1880s, the anti-black governments that took over, the later anti-apartheid and anti-white movements, all played a major role in the complication and marginalization of a white South African post-colonial, anti-apartheid writer. At the same time when postcoloniality has brought in a 'historical guilt' that has influenced the writings and representation of the anti-apartheid struggles by a white writer, it has also brought in an 'ambiguity' and cultural hybridity with regard to his identity. Such complex parameter concerning the historical space he occupies makes the representation of it ambiguous, almost paradoxical with regard to the prescriptive realist linear narrative of history suggested by Gordimer. Thus the space Coetzee's texts generate contains the 'magical autonomy' of individuals, characters and events that defers with the constructed historic meanings. *Life and Times of Michael K* is one such a text that embellishes the Coetzeean notion of history, by using poststructural strategies, a text of resistance and survival.

The postmodern strategies of deconstructing the metaphysical subject has shown that 'subject' is a construction, a product formed by the integration of power and discourses acting in their spacio-temporal limits. The word subject itself has etymological roots to the Latin word 'subjectus', which means subjugated or to be controlled by an authority. The narratives of discourses have helped in to link the 'subjugated' subject with the time and space thereby creating an identity. When Althusser has shown how a subject is formed by ideologies, Michel Foucault was instrumental in formulating the interdependencies and constructions of power, institutions and subjects with reference to the flow of time. It has thus helped to understand how historical monologues take part in the process of 'subjection' of an individual, and how social institutions help in the process. We could see how Coetzee is resisting the pervasion of such discourses in his art, and how the autonomy of his artwork, and the individuals represented in it resist such historical subjection. The 'elusiveness' (as critics say), is the same kind of limit experience and aesthetics of self that was Foucault's project towards the end of his career. Also the idea that an individual subject is not a static entity but a congregation of dynamic units that tends to be in flux, a dialogical subject that negates its own subjectivity, which was animated by the theories of Derrida, is deftly inscribed in the texts of Coetzee, especially in *Life and Times of Michael K* (hereafter will be referred to as Michael K and the character Michael K as just K), that's discussed in the following part of the paper.

"The problem of how the individual should be situated in relation to history becomes the driving concern in *Life and Times of Michael K*" (55), comments Dominic Head in his critical review of *Michael K*. The events narrated in the novel although alludes to specific historic events, but at the same time subverts the ideas of resistance and combating intense coercion of power on an individual by placing the 'life and times' of K. K's time and space integrates into evasive patches, burrows and gaps in the surveillance system, that works during times of severe social breakdown (when South Africa was undergoing civil wars, anti-apartheid movements). The novel shows how a text could construct an individual who becomes a paragon of resistance, who eludes the meanings of the time and who at the same time becomes part of a collective suffering. When in the second part of the novel, the medical officer says: "a human soul above and beneath classification, a soul blessedly untouched by doctrine, untouched by history" (Coetzee 115), it implies how K has evaded the significations thrust upon him by history. K's elusive nature is of particular importance because he evades confining structures and becomes a parable of geospatial resistance. In times of heavy curfew, he escapes the city, evades the soldiers and reaches the country. When the Visagiegrandson tries to exercise power over him, he escapes to the mountains. This act has particular significance as here the master/slave dialectics is demolished and at the same time K's defiance against capitalist dialectics of subjugation is also evident. K's evasion of spaces has this pattern of going into the nature, of implementing a novel ecological ethos that centers on a minimalistic existence, a mode of survival unintended of exploitation and capitalist notions of gain and profit. K's vocation as a gardener, and his choosing of gardening to war when a group of revolutionaries visit his farm, has significations beyond the implied meaning of coexisting with nature.

He even knew the reason why: because enough men had gone off to war saying the time for gardening was when the war was over; whereas there must be men to stay behind and keep gardening alive, or at least the idea of gardening; because once that cord was broken, the earth would grow hard and forget her children. (Coetzee 84)

It does also signify that K derives his existential meanings in reference to the space that's unfettered by anthropogenic institutions. Thus the camps, authorities, people and habits that perform certain socializing processes of creating labour, exploitation, marginalization, discrimination and control are for K meaningless referents that exist in a different plane altogether, unable to touch him.

The constructive framework of space and time has given the novel characteristics of a fable as some critics have noted. Coetzee does this through various subtle usage of allegories. Through K's survival, different spaces become allegorically significant. The Jakkalsdrif camp on the pretext of providing labour and accommodation, exploits its inhabitants, and segregates them to the peripheries. K thinks:

Parasite was the word the police captain had used: the camp at Jakkalsdrif, a nest of parasites hanging from the neat sunlit town, eating its substance, giving no nourishment back. Yet to K lying idle in his bed, thinking without passion (What is it to me, after all? he thought), it was no longer obvious which was host and which parasite, camp or town. (Coetzee 89)

The same way Kenilworth camp reprograms the 'waywards' to fit into the social realm of normalcy and control, in the name of rehabilitation. The mere presence of K in such spaces

endows significations and allegorical status. K escapes from those camps to perform gardening, another allegorical act. The medical officer says:

Your stay in the camp was merely an allegory, if you know that word. It was an allegory-speaking at the highest level-of how scandalously, how outrageously a meaning can take up residence in a system without becoming a term in it. (Coetzee 127)

K's identity transverse through a plane of metonymic and metaphoric textual inseminations and disseminations. The representation metonymy as CM (Coetzee 55) (the only implication of K's social identity as a Coloured Male) in the camps, his hare lipped silence, escaping the camps, initial sowing of his mother ashes in the farm, burrowing the field to lay there indolent to the point of starvation, when his cultivated "children" (Coetzee 50) made way to the revolutionaries and to the soldiers who accused him of treachery; the allegories in the text are in constant 'play' with regard to K's being and existence. K's presence and evasiveness not only breaks the binaries in the text, in the allegories at play, but also tend to dissolve them into disseminative narratives. K's own play with the silence, that one takes for granted as naivety or helplessness, also has in it a fashioned cunningness as visible when he faces the soldiers["If I look very stupid, he thought, perhaps they will let me through"(Coetzee 32)]. And at the same time an equally important tool of resisting power wedged through language, when K resists the persistent effort of the medical officer to understand him. K's silence also could be the result of a man's inability to find coherence and meanings in his actions. "He had a presentiment of a single meaning upon which they were converging or threatening to converge, though he did not know yet what that might be" (Coetzee 69). The narrative also takes part in deepening the ambiguity of perceiving K, for we assimilate knowledge about K through a non-reliable third person omniscient narrative, in the first and the last sections of the novel.

K's identity becomes a site of Derridian disseminations, subverting any act of interpreting and reaching at a final meaning. K's elusiveness thus becomes a textual process of undermining the exertion of power upon the text by monolithic interpretations. Jane Poyner writes:"Michael K is a paragon of the resistant text because he eludes codification, both real (that of the state) and textual (by refuting the allegorical readings that his characterization invites)." (Poyner 76) The medical officer is one such failed instance of interpreting K, so does the allegory goes to the readers of the text; the failure at interpreting K would lead to finding our mistakes in reading, just as the medical officer did when K escaped the camp; the text would escape final interpretations. So, Michael K, the meta-fictional text encapsulates K, the meta-allegoric character, as both become ideal representations of resistance. Michael K as a text proves Derrida's concept about textuality, that there is nothing beyond the text.

K, in his acts of defiance against power structures, institutions and subjugating processes of socialization, transgresses the constructs of his very being. Dominic Head finds this interestingly parallel to Heidegger's 'Being' as a state of existence prior to all knowledge (109). K's act of burrowing into the social constructs, deconstructing them at the same time being evasive, obliterates the 'becoming' and embraces the 'being', the very subsistent primordial being, who has transgressed the historical limits of 'becoming'. The idea of such a transgression was put forward by Michel Foucault. Foucault has explicated the importance of artistic constructions of a being to transgress the intense subjugations of power. Michael K reminds of a Foucauldian pursuit for transgression. The same way, Mark Mathuray

has incorporated the idea of limit experience as represented in Coetzeean texts with that of the experience of sublime from the re-readings of the Kantian sublime by the French philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy. Nancy propounds that the sublime does not cross the limit but is experienced at the limit, where there is no ethics or aesthetics. Mathuray explicates that Coetzee uses 'stalled sublime' to let the text reach its limit and problematize itself, the representations it make.

He traces the limits of subjectivity through the problematization of racial, social and class distinctions, the divide between the human and the animal, and thus the boundaries between nature and culture. Through the textual strategies of the stalled sublime and the depiction of an individual at the border of her condition as a living being, the 'device of discriminations' on which the symbolic order (particularly the colonial symbolic order) rests is destabilized. The logic of the stalled sublime refuses the reconciling fiction of a transcendent escape from the quotidian.(169)

Towards the end, the 'being' experienced by K is Sublime in nature, one that is self-referential and subsistent, one who, in a sudden moment of realization declares that in the country "there is time enough for everything" (Coetzee 138) for him to do, the realization of K's own spacio-temporality, where his being belongs, an enchanting denouement Coetzee's text achieves.

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Social Control and Formation of Dystopias in Ballardian Short Stories

Abstract:

The motto of modern urbanism, the ultimate ambition of every urban planner and architect is the production of a Utopian City. Postmodern critics of urban studies have pointed out how constantly evolving cities like New York, Chicago etc. are in constant battle to get rid of the traces of their past and challenge themselves to rise above future. Such cities, however, were not devoid of anxieties about the widening gap between social groups, increasing slums, gender and racial conflicts, crimes, poverty, misery etc. and on most occasions questions related to such issues are left unanswered. Literary works have always addressed these questions directly and had pointed out the possibilities of a resultant dystopia in our quest for utopia. J.G. Ballard is a writer known for his experiments with the genre of dystopian fiction and this paper is an attempt to analyse how he utilizes the urban landscape and architecture to elucidate how totalitarian form of government and technological dehumanization leads to the formation of dystopias and the aftermath of it.

This paper is an attempt to analyse the role of control mechanisms in the formation of the dystopian societies in two short stories by J.G. Ballard, "Chronopolis" and "The Ultimate City". By reflecting upon the Ballard's narration of the architecture of the cities, I will try to postulate how a lack of proper state apparatus can lead to the failure of effective social control measures and result in the formation of dystopias.

Keywords: Social control, Surveillance, Architecture, City, Dystopia

Social Control and Formation of Dystopias in Ballardian Short Stories

The state plays a crucial role in the normalisation of social life; the acts and behaviours of individuals are validated by the codification normalised by the state. While social control can be defined as an act that occurs at an individual level "when an individual intentionally alters the behavior of other individuals." (Gibbs 411), it is often the decisions made by the state apparatus that makes a larger impact on society. Since the state apparatus is a body that has access and influence on all kinds of capital (economic, human, cultural and military), the normalisation of social activities brings about uniform effects in the society. Balanced social control from the governing body is a necessity for maintaining order in any society. Nathaniel Coleman observes:

Rejection of politics tends toward one of two new organizational systems. One replaces political action with management and centralized decision making. The other replaces social obligations, normally negotiated politically, with the sovereignty of individual desire and action. The first tends toward tyranny, the second towards chaos. (81-82).

By reflecting upon the Ballard's narration of the architecture of the cities, I will try to

postulate how a lack of proper state apparatus can lead to the failure of effective social control measures and result in the formation of dystopias.

The pattern of architectures in a city is often an attempt to monitor the quotidian of the people to fit into a predesigned set of rules and norms. While Jeremy Bentham's 'Panopticon' is the most discussed idea when it comes to any study that observes architecture as a means of exercising power, every city possesses an architecture which, in one way or the other, ensures that a certain level of control is always practiced on the civilians. From a street lamp kept to lighten up the darkest corner of the city to the coloured lights controlling the vehicles at a traffic island are all inherently built on Bentham's idea of exerting control through 'visibility' rather than 'force'. This paper is an attempt to analyse the role of control mechanisms in the formation of the dystopian societies in two short stories by J.G. Ballard, "Chronopolis" and "The Ultimate City".

We find an identical storyline in both "Chronopolis" and "The Ultimate City". We find the protagonists going to an old city, which was once at the peak of development but had broken down and was abandoned by the settlers at some point in time. The protagonists are influenced by the mechanisms of the respective cities they end up in, and they try to restart the utopian project that had kept the administration of those cities running during its prime years. Eventually, they realise the futility of the ventures as the drawbacks of their plans strike them, and they accept their failure. However, these stories differ from each other regarding the implementation of the control systems used for the city administration. While 'Chronopolis' disintegrated due to the excess of the control mechanism, "The Ultimate City" shows us how uncontrolled life in urban environments can lead to the downfall of a city.

"Chronopolis" revolves around Conrad Newman's obsession with 'time'. We are presented with a society where the use of clocks and watches are treated as a crime under the law. There is a 'Time Police' who are assigned to confiscate and destroy watches and clocks in the possession of individuals and initiate disciplinary actions against those who had used it. It must be noted that not all clocks were destroyed; the authorities were still using it to give out regular sirens instructing people about their work timings. We also find a clock in the prison cell where Newman is finally sent to.

The old city where Newman was taken to by his teacher, Stacey, to explain the story of clocks and why they are not in use anymore, was completely driven by clocks. As Stacey and Newman rode into Chronopolis or the old city, the theme of 'excess' attains prominence. Stacey explains to Newman "Thirty million people once lived in this city" (156), and less than two million of a declining population is left in the distal suburbs. Elaborate railway system, multi-level supermarkets, department stores and cinema halls were markers that conveyed that "They were moving forward in time rather than, as Conrad had expected, back into the past of a fossil city" (Chronopolis 157). As they entered the core part of the city, Newman found an excess of 'clocks'.

Michel Foucault has observed that a "population being in itself both wealth as labour force, source of economic activity and consumption, and cause of poverty, when excessive or idle" (Power/Knowledge 151). The administrators of Chronopolis had depended on 'Time' for regulating the excess population and the consumerist culture. They established clocks across the city, "at every street corner, over every archway, three quarters of the way up the sides of buildings, covering every conceivable angle of approach." (Chronopolis 157).

People were categorised, and they were branded under one colour code or the other, and their lives were scheduled according to a timetable that worked in tandem with the clocks.

Only by synchronizing every activity, every footstep forward or backward, every meal, bus-halt, and telephone call, could the organism support itself. Like the cells in your body, which proliferate into mortal cancers if allowed to grow in freedom, every individual here had to subserve to the overriding needs of the city or fatal bottlenecks threw it into total chaos. (Chronopolis 159)

In effect, the system of clocks turns out to be a surveillance mechanism with high potential. Just like Bentham's Panopticon, this mechanism works on the principles of geometry and architecture. The availability or unavailability of a service is entirely dependent on the colour codes. As the colour codes inform the profession and the currency used by an individual, they had no choice but to stick to the routines prescribed to them. One was always aware of the meaninglessness of breaking the schedule given to them. The system ensures, as Foucault would put it, "one is totally seen, without ever seeing" (202). The gaze of the well designed and continuous clock system guaranteed that the citizens followed some order that kept the life in the city running albeit the increasing population and consumerism. This, hypothetically, creates a Utopian society that "assures its economy (in material, in personnel, in time); it assures its efficacy by its preventative character, its continuous functioning and its automatic mechanisms." (Discipline and Punish 206). However, from another perspective, it creates a dystopian society where people are unable and unwilling to do anything beyond the scheduled life.

In the case of "The Ultimate City", once again we are presented with two cities. The first one, named the 'Garden City' from where the protagonist Halloway begins his journey, is an 'ecotopia'. The second one, the Old City, is a place that had once hit the peak of development in terms of the consumerist culture; Halloway's initial description of the city goes like this:

Display signs proliferated everywhere like some voracious metal flora, untrimmed and uncontrolled. The crudeness of the asphalt and concrete streets compared with the tiled and flower-decked pathways of Garden City, the elemental technology of power cables and ventilation shafts, had all the anarchic strength of a proto-industrial society, closer to the massive cantilever bridges and steam engines of the great Victorians than to Halloway's image of the Twentieth Century. (The Ultimate City 881)

The architecture of the city, especially the presence of multi-storeyed buildings and pubs that were not functional was still good enough to make Halloway feel that this place is much better than everything that he has seen in Garden City. The life in the old City was driven by non-renewable fuel sources, which, once depleted, resulted in the migration of people to the 'Garden City' and similar locations, which were built on renewable energy sources.

Both Newman and Halloway found their cities too passive and the life that had prevailed in the old cities far more exciting. Newman felt that the life at Chronopolis was "Highly organized but better than the sort of life we lead." (Chronopolis 161). For Halloway "the cluster of skyscrapers offered more security to him than the pastoral world of Garden City with its kindly farmers and engineers." (The Ultimate City 881). Both of them tried to re-ignite the lost life into the old cities. Newman's attempt is limited to the repairing of the

stopped clocks, and the story ends with his realisation of how clocks can be destructive objects when an individual's life is completely dependent on it. Though the old man, Marshall, whom Newman meets at Chronopolis was still on his mission to restart all the clocks, Ballard does not say anything about the success or failure of this venture. On the other hand, a major part of 'The Ultimate City' deals with Halloway's effort to rebuild the old metropolis.

Halloway, with the help of Olds (a mute who has taught himself to operate/repair machines and was lured into Halloway's city revival project with an offer to be taught flying in return for his favours to Halloway), tries to resume the life in the metropolis. He succeeds in getting fuel from many of the abandoned cars and much aviation fuel with which he was able to provide power supplies to many buildings, street lights, traffic islands, etc. Soon, people came back to the city from suburbs and as time progressed, bars, nightclubs, amusement arcades, etc., were opened up. Halloway felt, "It was only now, in this raucous light and noise, that the city was being its true self, only in this flood of cheap neon that it was really alive." (The Ultimate City 907). This lavishness, in the long run, would have brought back the scenario that had happened years back, the breakdown of the city due to the lack of power sources. However, Halloway's project failed much before the inevitable.

Michel Foucault's observation, that architecture has become more political in the Eighteenth century, can be utilised in the context of both these stories to draw inferences about the collapse of the time driven administration of Chronopolis and the failure of the revival project of Halloway in his city. It must be noted that Foucault had clarified that his statement never meant that architecture was not political before. "I only meant to say that in the eighteenth century one sees the development of reflection upon architecture as a function of the aims and techniques of the government of societies." (The Foucault Reader 239). On the contrary, the population explosion, issues related to health, urban questions, etc. made the political nature of architecture more prominent and explicit. (Power/Knowledge 148)

Disciplinary surveillance is associated with the state and bureaucracy (Muir 265), but, in the case of 'Chronopolis', it was administered by the clocks. No other governance system exists in the city. As Stacey explains to Newman, "Central Time Control, a sort of Ministry of Time, gradually took over the old parliamentary buildings as their legislative functions diminished." (Chronopolis 161). This taking over resulted in the buildings losing their political value; the relation between space and an individual lost its dynamic nature. Earlier, if the architecture of a building or a region was rearranged to suit the convenience of an individual, addressing issues of co-existence, displacement, etc., now, the meaning formation of architectures became static. Nothing could be altered since people were given specific instructions using the clocks and their performance at each location were managed through a predesigned system.

As much as the life in Chronopolis resembled the 'Disciplinary Societies' of Foucault, the possibility of a 'Society of Control' cannot be ignored. Although the surveillance system was primarily architectural and the only technology in use was clocks, there was a normalising effect that they created on the citizens. The colour coded mechanism gave birth to 'interdictory spaces' "in which an individual's arrival at the destination of a particular subjectivity or identity is mediated through multiple processes of monitoring and identification." (Nayar 113). The lack of individualism created by the colour codes, the colour-coded money, library card, etc., which are necessary to survive in Chronopolis

reminds us of how in a 'Society of Control' "what is important is no longer either a signature or a number, but a code" (Deleuze 294). This coding, as Stacey explains and Newman agrees is like, "the whole system was evolved for his convenience, no one else's." (Chronopolis 160).

However, most importantly it is Deleuze's interpretations on the impact of architecture on human behaviour that can be useful here. He notes the crisis faced by the "environments of enclosure- prison, hospital, factory, school, family. The family is an 'interior', in crisis like all other interiors—scholarly, professional, etc." (293). When an individual is, as found in the case of Chronopolis, directed by the administration about the timings allowed for him to use a washing machine or watch television or make a phone call to his wife, the concept and space of a family is kept under question. The building is supposed to provide him with the privacy and security, but it works the opposite way. The room is not his own anymore. Deleuze himself doubts if people will adapt to or show resistance against 'Societies of Control' (296). The life in Chronopolis finally reached a point where, to put it in Foucault's words, "it became apparent that if one governed too much, one did not govern at all—that one provoked results contrary to those one desired." (The Foucault Reader 249), and people destroyed the entire system of clocks and started a life without clocks and watches.

On the other hand, as I mentioned earlier, the revival project of the Old City in "The Ultimate City" was a failure due to the lack of disciplinary mechanism. Hallway was overwhelmed by the idea of ruling the city that his plans went up to the level of printing currencies under his name and increasing the working hours of the labourers by manipulating the clocks using the expertise of Olds. He hardly thought about the issues he was likely to face; "pollution, traffic congestion, inadequate municipal services, inflation and deficit public financing" (The Ultimate City 911), were not given any due consideration in his plans of rebuilding the metropolis.

In fact, Hallway was happy with the initial set of violence he observed from Stillman, a convict who was taken out of jail on parole by Buckmaster, the man who is introduced in the story as the man in charge of the Old City. "For all his fear of Stillman, he knew that he was half-hoping that he would be violent again. He imagined the city filled with people, their lives invigorated by just this kind of callous and stylized aggression." (The Ultimate City 900). Even as the troops of Stillman started growing and the rate of crimes increased to a level that "Hallway's plans for expansion had been effectively shelved by this deliberate vandalism, the wholesale destruction of complete city blocks." (The Ultimate City 912), he takes some pride in those happenings. He tells Buckmaster "Everything is here that you can think of, sir, ... 'And it's a living urban structure, not a film set. We've got traffic problems, inflation, even the beginnings of serious crime and pollution..." (The Ultimate City 914). At no point do we find an effort from Hallway to set up a 'vulnerability cartography', "the mapping of spaces in terms of flows of threats, strangers, troublemakers, vagrants and the deterrent mechanisms needed and deployed to restrict or prevent these flows." (Nayar 110).

The absence of a disciplinary mechanism, even at the bare minimum obviously destroys any order we expect from a civilised society. As much as it is constraining, the control mechanism can be beneficial and, at times, a necessity. It is not that Hallway was not aware of the security systems, but he was unable to utilise them.

Hallway had made the local police station his operational headquarters. The lavish wall-maps and communications equipment, the electric alarm

signals that ran to so many of the stores and businesses, even the clandestine listening devices which the police had bugged in to many of the bars and hotels, made the station a natural headquarters. (The Ultimate City 905).

He also restores the traffic lights in the city as a part of the revival project, but the political function of these spaces are not met. While the possibility of utilising the police station as a source to keep a check on things happening around, he seems to be less interested in it. Rather, he uses it as a source of fun when he uses the alarm systems to scare away the rescue team who came in search of him from the Garden City. Even when there are new settlers in the city, he offers them jobs in market stores or Olds' automobile workshop and tries to make money out of the whole thing rather than set up a small group of administrators to regulate the life in the city.

Traffic islands are one of the essential regulating feature present in any metropolis. In this story, the traffic island becomes a powerful symbol that shows how the failure of architecture in fulfilling its political function can lead to the collapse of an entire society. Michalis Lianos points out various functions of a traffic island:

repressive surveillance (traffic offences), detective surveillance (stolen vehicles), the regulation of traffic flow (reduction of congestions), support for planning (recording information on all aspects of traffic), accident prevention (transmission of information to drivers on obstacles to anticipate). (415).

One of the early crimes committed by Stillman was breaking the traffic lights; though Halloway used to stop his car at the red signal, he never bothered to implement it as a law nor questioned Stillman's disrespect for it. Later on, we find Stillman and his group start looting the stores and stealing Olds' cars. The crime rate increases gradually and an over speeding driver in the troop ran over a small girl.

Foucault, in *Discipline and Punish*, mentions how “rulers dreamt of the state of plague” where “plague stands for all forms of confusion and disorder” (199). Halloway, as the self-assumed ruler of the city, silently approves the violence of Stillman but had no mechanism running to keep a check on it. He failed to realise that administering a city goes beyond the capitalist motto of increased production and surplus income. To put it another way, the absence of social control is deviance and disorder.

Man's evolution as a social animal is intrinsically connected with the cities he has built. While the earliest image of the city would have stood for order and discipline, owing more to its architectural specificity and structure (the patterning of streets, well-connected transport facilities, hierarchies and uniformities of buildings, etc.), Ballard's narratives provide a case of an order giving way to chaos. The 'clock-driven society' in “Chronopolis” shows us how the centralized control mechanism had a tyrannical impact on the lives of the residents of the city. At the same time, the Old City in “The Ultimate City” met with utter chaos as there existed no control mechanism to regulate the lives of people. While Ballard's writing may be considered excessively futuristic, one cannot discard the possibilities he points out. If the city can be seen as a metaphor for the society, Stanley Cohen says, then “the city of the present - the iconography of violence, crime, insecurity, pollution, traffic congestion, overcrowding - is the society of the future.” (205).

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Sex-role Stereotypes in Children's Literature: A Study of Select Novels

Abstract

Children's Literature, which has been very popular since the seventeenth century, plays a key role in constructing the identities of male and female children. As transmitters of social norms, these children's books can be seen as simultaneously reflecting the ideals of society and inherent prejudices within it. The prevalent sex-role stereotypes shared by society shape the identities of children. Many of the children's books are effective and significant means of communicating cultural ideals regarding gender-appropriate behavior. They have a vested interest in the promotion of conformity to normative heterosexual femininity and masculinity. They have reinforced the traditional role of the active male and the passive female. They depict hegemonic masculinity, which ensures the marginalization of other masculinities like gay, queer, effeminate etc. Hegemonic masculinity, which is considered the most socially endorsed form of masculinity emphasizes heteronormativity and also certifies the subordination of women. Boys in these books are brave, heroic leaders who go on exciting adventures, occasionally rescuing girls and animals. Female characters are largely recognized and accepted through their domestic accomplishments, their timidity of soul, their gentle appearance and manners. The persistent imbalance of gender representation in these books highlights the importance of this genre in greatly shaping children's psyche. Thus it serves as the transmitter of the dominant patriarchal values.

Children's Literature, which has been very popular since the seventeenth century serve as a transmitter of social norms. Many of the children's books depict hegemonic masculinity, which is associated with the traits like strength, valor, audacity, wisdom, self-reliance etc. as the norm and natural. Hegemonic masculinity which ensures the marginalization of other masculinities like gay, queer, effeminate etc. is considered the most socially endorsed form of masculinity. It emphasizes heteronormativity and also certifies the subordination of women.

The history of children's literature shows itself to be predominantly male-oriented. Even the women writers conform to the patriarchal tradition. The early women writers adopted this kind of writing as a publishing and marketing strategy. With the wake of feminism, women writers are liberated and many counter narratives have emerged. However, this kind of delineation of masculinity continues to pervade many of the narratives. The article examines the novels of Nesbit (*Five Children and It*, 1902), Blyton (*Five on a Treasure Island*, 1942), and Dadey and Jones (*The Adventures of Bailey School Kids: Zombies Don't Play Soccer*, 1995) and endeavors to analyze how these children's books endorse the patriarchal discourse, and the ways in which children's fiction construct and represent masculinity.

The political context of the late nineteenth century, with the reverberations of the First Wave Feminism led to the fear of women's emancipation and a change in the discourse on gender and sexuality, and a feeling of cultural insecurity. All this resulted in a longing for

strict boundaries around the definitions of gender and a will to fix women and men in their separate spheres (Showalter 4). Besides the proper conduct books, many narratives of the period served as conduct books which advocated appropriate and acceptable behavior for both men and women. This trend was much explicit in books written for children.

In the history of children's literature, the nineteenth century and early decades of the twentieth century are defined as the golden age of juvenile literature with an increasing number of publications for children and with a special focus on shaping children with different sex roles in a fictive world. When there emerges a subsequent division in the boundaries of children's literature in the shape of different literary representations and genres for boys and girls, understanding the existence of a gendered split, it highlights the noteworthy differences in the construction of femininity and masculinity in an Empire-focused juvenile literature.

The delineation of the concept of hegemonic masculinity in the children's books of this period is corollary to the culmination of the imperialistic spirit of the time. As the colonial endeavors of the nation demanded valiant, aggressive, tough, “real” men to build the empire, such images of masculinity were elevated and transmitted as supreme. Victorian children's literature as a tool of political and social ideology suggests a boyhood whose foundation is “muscular” in nature. In this political context, the boy who is not regulated by the imperial ideology is identified as a political danger to the nation.

John Tosh emphasizes that the empire propaganda associated manliness with the “learning to stand up for oneself in the company of men, both in the physical sense of showing courage, and in the social sense of finding one's place in a deeply hierarchical society” (197). This led to the birth of manly and athletic heroes in children's fiction. These young heroes are portrayed as, excelled at warrior skills, and are always in pursuit of adventure, knowing how to stand against unfairness and dangers. While self-sacrifice and purity were recognized as the feminine ideals and “girls in books aspired to ethereal benignity,” aggressiveness and physical strength imbued with the male models inaugurated the fictional boys “to explore, challenge and master” (Reynolds 51). Nesbit's novels, placed in this socio-political context articulate this imperial ideology of Britain.

Nesbit's Five Children and It (1902) is about a group of five siblings – Robert, Anthea, Cyril, Jane and Lamb – moving from London to the countryside of Kent and their encounter with a sand-fairy known as the Psammead. The author's depiction of hegemonic masculinity is much evident in the characterization of the two brothers - Cyril and Robert. The group is guided by them. The girls always follow their instructions. The dominant male behavior is best manifested in the portrayal of the gallant demeanor of the boys. In chapter 1, when they are about to encounter the sand-fairy, Anthea and Jane are frightened by the sight of a big hole, as they mistake it for a snake's abode. But Cyril, their fearless brother at once jumps into the hole and declares: “I'm not afraid of snakes. I like them. If it is a snake I'll tame it, and it will follow me everywhere, and I'll let it sleep round my neck at night” (9).

This display of valor is very pronounced throughout the novel. Further in chapter 1, when they are denied entry into the house, as Martha the housemaid couldn't recognize them, for they were made beautiful by the Psammead, it is Robert who shows the courage to go alone and climb the window to open the door (23). In addition, the boys are very well aware of their privileged status as strong and brave and of the inferior status of the girls as weak and cowardly. This is signified in many instances in which they proclaim: “We don't want to

frighten the girls” (24). The exhibit of “manly” gallantry reaches its zenith in chapter 6, where Robert confronts the two armed men in the besieging force: “He stood still – and the two men seemed quite pleased with him. 'By my halidom,' said one, 'a brave varlet this!' Robert felt pleased at being called brave, and ... it made him feel brave” (129).

The ideological attitude toward masculinity as well as its presentation as central to the patriarchal system of the British imperial rule appropriates strong male models for boys and implants hegemonic *manliness* as a superior male image. The encounter between Robert and the besiegers in chapter 7 is fairly illustrative in this respect. “Another man had swum over, and his fingers were on the window-ledge ... Robert saw the clinging fingers, and hit them as hard as he could with an iron bar that he caught up from the floor. The man fell with a plop-plash into the moat-water” (152). Thus the boys in the fiction became “manlier than manly: braver, stronger, more loyal, more patriotic, more cunning, more masterful and more reticent than ever before” (Reynolds 59). In addition to the glorification of the boys' gallantry, their cleverness is also signaled here presenting them as ideal and “useful type of adventurers for the empire to have” (Kitzan 153).

Enid Blyton, like Nesbit explores the social conventions and morals and normalizing concepts of home and heterosexual families and thereby upholds the status quo. Blyton's writing was popular with both boys and girls as her “adventure and family stories are about groups of children of both sexes” (Druce 256). The portrayal of gender roles in the writings of Blyton encodes the dominant gender ideology of the Western society. Blyton's characterization has been much criticized as being stereotyped and encouraging sexist attitudes. *Five on a Treasure Island* (1942), the first book in the series, *The Famous Five*, features the adventures of a group of young children in the Kirrin Island – Julian, Dick, Anne and Georgina (George) – and their dog Timmy.

Julian the oldest of the four, is cousin to George and older brother to Dick and Anne. As he is tall, strong and intelligent as well as caring, responsible and strict, he is in charge of the group. He is demanding, domineering and very protective of Anne. Dick, the younger brother has a good gymnastic ability which helps the five in numerous dilemmas and has a heroic role. He uses his wits in many adventures. He is very caring of Anne and does his best to keep her cheered up when she gets upset. Anne is the youngest of the group; and generally takes care of their domestic duties during the Five's various camping holidays. She easily becomes frightened and dislikes the adventures the Five constantly encounter. She is known to be very forgetful sometimes and she does let her tongue run away with her. She likes to play the “House Wife”. George (Georgina) is cousin to the three siblings. She is a tomboy and insists that people should call her George. With her short hair and boys' clothes she is often mistaken for a boy which pleases her enormously. She is sometimes extremely unmanageable and causes trouble to her mother as well as her cousins.

Blyton endorses the socially acceptable stereotypes of the time in her choice of the male leader, Julian in the *Famous Five* series. As Berguland suggests, “writers who want to reach large groups of readers tend to choose a male protagonist rather than a female one, as even women are on the whole much more willing to read about men than the other way round” (138). This is an obvious indication of how the dominant discourse operated in society at the time i.e., girls and women, in their inferior position, were willing to read about boys and men, but the superior boys and men were seldom willing to subordinate themselves to read about girls and women.

The boy characters in the novel, Julian and Dick can be seen as counterparts of Cyril and Robert in Nesbit's *Five Children and It*. Both of them seem to conform to the expected role of the hegemonic man. Blyton reinforces the largely unquestioned notion that boys are more valued by her society by having Julian, the oldest male protagonist in the *Famous Five* stories, take on the stereotypical male role of protector and leader, which is also shared by Dick. The boy characters are placed in a position of privilege and power.

The boys' penchant for adventure is employed as a telling metaphor for the "manly" aspects of their character. Their love for adventure is hinted at the very outset of the novel, when it is decided that they are going to the Kirrin Island to spend their holidays. A highly excited Dick cries: "I just feel as if it's the right place somehow. It sounds sort of adventurous!" (4). It is also evident in chapter 7, where they plan to explore the wreck. Dick's words resonate with excitement: "Well, then, we'd better explore it thoroughly ourselves before anyone else does!" (90).

Another instance is given in chapter 8, which describes the day on which the execution of the plan is decided: "Dick woke and grinned at Julian. A feeling of happiness crept over him. They were going on an adventure" (101). As Reynolds asserts, while self-sacrifice and purity are recognized as the feminine ideals and "girls in books aspired to ethereal benignity", aggressiveness, gallantry and physical strength imbued with the male models inaugurated the fictional boys "to explore, challenge and master" (51). The boys' capability to withstand unfairness is explicitly underlined in the novel.

Blyton reinforces the socially acceptable feminine behavior by portraying stereotypical feminine domestic activities in a positive manner. Throughout the 21 *Famous Five* books Anne is presented as enjoying domestic chores and activities. This is brilliantly enunciated even in Anne's metaphorical description of the sky: "The sky was so beautifully blue that Anne couldn't help feeling it had been freshly washed! 'It looks just as if it had come back from the laundry,' she told the others" (102-3). She feels pride when she is praised for success in chores such as "housekeeping." The highest praise that the other characters can give to Anne is to refer to her as "good housewife."

Even though Blyton portrays George as capable and successful in various situations and activities in which boys and male characters would traditionally dominate, such as swimming and rowing her boat, the prevailing patriarchal ideology is embedded within the narration. The character, George along with the author is revealed to have internalized the masculine/feminine dyad. In the characterization of George, Blyton underlines the dominant discourse that privileges traditional masculinity. Blyton's implicit acknowledgement and thus the textual corroboration of the fact that boys are more valued by the society than girls is evident in George's lingering belief that being a boy is better than being a girl. Thus Blyton portrays in her writings, the social conventions and expectations about heteronormative roles in a patriarchal society, through the ideological manipulation of her characters.

Children's literature at the end of the twentieth century and at the beginning of the twenty-first century, though reveals the influence of Third Wave Feminist activism, this influence is only superficial. Despite the increased range of career opportunities and lifestyles available to both sexes today, stereotypes are still present and produce negative connotations and consequences. These stereotypes are still inflicted on children at a very young age via socialization, to which the contribution of children's literature is imperative.

The Adventures of the Bailey School Kids series (1990-2007), co-authored by Dadey and Jones, popular especially among the elementary school kids is a series of children's books which revolve round a group of recurring characters- Eddie, Howie, Melody and Liza- and their adventures. Howie is a friend to Liza, Eddie and Melody. He is the most logical, brave and intelligent of the group. Eddie is the tough guy of the group, and usually makes fun of his friends for believing stupid things. Liza is the most compassionate and sensitive of the group, usually not wanting to resort to methods that will result in others being hurt, even if they are monsters. Melody is a close friend of Liza. *Zombies Don't Play Soccer* is the fifteenth book in the series which consists of more than fifty books.

Dadey and Jones like Blyton and Nesbit endorse the conventional stereotypes in their choice of the male leader, Eddie in the series. At the very outset of the novel itself, Eddie is introduced as the centre of attention. His childish pranks are bestowed with a heroic status. Eddie can be classified to the group of “manly” boy characters in the traditional novels who carried their well-developed sense of fun and adventure into the adult world and used it to punish all those who were foolish or ineffectual. The steadfast and the buoyant spirit of the heroic male leader is much evident in Eddie's optimistic words that “anything is possible.” Dadey and Jones depict the weak physique of the girls as a foil to the sturdy masculine body. The reference to Liza using a muscular ointment as a preparation to play soccer and Melody's agreement to that is fairly illustrative.

Furthermore, the display of boys' knowledge and reason are depicted in sharp contrast to girls' ignorance. The demonstration of audacity reaches its culmination in the chapter titled “*Cemetery*.” When Coach Graves throws the team ball into a deep pit, it is Eddie who shows the courage and impetus to jump into the pit in order to take the ball. The scene also exposes the protective and supporting roles of the hegemonic man which are well enacted by Eddie. *The Bailey School Kids* series can also be classified into the broad category of children's books which reinforce, legitimate, and reproduce a patriarchal gender system. In the novels, the overtones of gender bias are promulgated effectively and subtly. In *Zombies Don't Play Soccer*, in chapter 2, Eddie's reaction when he is informed that the new coach is a woman is a manifestation of blatant sexism: “Oh, no!” ... ‘The new coach is a woman!’ ... ‘She probably doesn't know anything about soccer. We'll have to tiptoe around the ball so we don't break her fingernails” (5). As V. Geetha, the distinguished feminist and social activist has argued in her work *Gender*:

The idea is that whatever women do or are urged to do, which is different from what Nature or God ostensibly meant them to do, they must be on guard. They cannot and must not risk doing or saying anything which suggests they are unfeminine. For to be unfeminine is also to be unnatural. (22)

Dadey and Jones unambiguously conform to the patriarchal conventions of the genre by entrusting the boy characters, with vital roles which prove to be the pivots in the novel. The girl characters are either excluded from the scene or depicted in extreme passivity. This aspect is brilliantly delineated in the last chapter which deals with the details of the soccer game. Melody is excluded from the game as her ankle sprains and Liza is almost passive in the game despite her use of the muscle ointment.

The bigotry with regard to gender is also apparent in the characterization of Coach Graves, the principal elder figure in the novel. At the end of the novel, it is revealed that the kids win

the soccer on their own and without any assistance from the coach. The traditional belief is covertly alluded here, that a woman is not fit for a man's job. Howie's observation is remarkable in this respect: "“She looks like my mom after a hard day at work”" (46).

Women have already been in the public domain with different interests and have found ways to express their needs in the twenty-first century, but the power of the Victorian romantic female images are actually still valid. The female representations for the ideal womanhood still continue to control the perception of the modern woman (Reynolds and Humble 4-5). Like many other children's books, *Zombies Don't Play Soccer* also provides insight into the social reproduction of gender inequality and the maintenance of the gender system. The portrayal of unequal mould of males and females thus contributes to and reinforces the maintenance of the status quo with regard to gender.

Thus even women writers like Edith Nesbit, Enid Blyton, Marcia Thornton Jones and Debbie Dadey have written in the expected mode, having internalized the dominant patriarchal ideology. Nesbit's works reflect the Victorian imperial ideology and Blyton endorses the anti-feminist ethos of the mid-twentieth century which remained dominant despite the reverberations of First and Second Wave Feminisms. Even though Jones and Dadey continue to write in a period which witnesses the culmination of the feministic spirit, they also represent a larger group of women writers, who conform to the dominant discourse, which in turn regulates them.

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Power of Change, Culture, Narratives and Divine Intervention in Literary Ventures

Abstract

Multiple visions, multitasking and multiculturalism have magically intervened and subtly displaced the conventional beliefs and technicalities. The changes have been powerfully projected in all facets of life. The alterations and modifications in lifestyle remained as a natural condition to adjust, accommodate and adapt to newness in all fields. The confluence of cultures and the conglomerations of ideas have fused and defused accepting new structures and patterns to construct a society that is receptive to the power of change. The need to exist and be accepted facilitates changes at a rapid pace. This has resulted in representing life as a roller coaster ride where people are engaged in effective management of time and resources. The narrative technique has been designed innovatively to captivate and conquer the strangely powerful modes of expressions. Yet, in doing so, we are willing to accommodate gossip as a technique to be encouraged and distortion of words under the banner of "chutnification", as newness. Though the past genres have been expanded revised and reversed and the present norms decorated with tempting trends there is a deterioration in the quality of life that is led. These attractive improvisations are not duly supported by the needful standards of life that stabilize society. The pseudo and superficial powers that govern the artists today ought to be negated. The new modern trends distort reality and reject the power of values and true concerns. Therefore the very objective and use of power is defeated. This paper hopes to introduce the right concerns in order to reconstruct society using the divine power to transform and purify minds.

Literature reflects life in all its varied forms. It unleashes its energy through the writings to highlight the complexities of the world. The power of God, relationships, positions, wealth, creativity, women and arts are explored through literary works. It helps one to possess the apt form of power that can facilitate life to flourish and function favourably fulfilling God's will. This paper dwells on the power of writing that can help in reflecting and transforming society for "language, images, and the entire cultural sphere are all viewed as crucial to the social and political order," (Habib 114). Power is therefore released in fascinating and fastidious ways. The imperfections and flaws are innovatively installed in myriad ways to initiate changes by many literary men and women. These attractive improvisations are not duly supported by the needful standards of life that stabilize society. The pseudo and superficial powers that govern the artists today ought to be negated. The new modern trend distorts reality and rejects the power of values and true concerns. Therefore the very objective and use of power is defeated. William Faulkner's *As I lay dying* and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* are chosen to discuss the values of true power and artistic excellence.

William Faulkner has very candidly communicated the plight of the family life that has lost its love and concern. The superficiality in relationships and the artificiality in relating to God have unearthed the uncertainty and lack of self analysis of individuals in the novel *As I*

lay dying. As the novel unwinds Addie Bundren is found watching her son make her coffin while she is waiting to breathe her last. The sons and the daughter are in their own world and the reality seems so unreal. The monologues help us muse over the unnatural situations. A kind of numbness to the practical conditions of life exists and truth is replaced by falsehood as it is based on the assumptions and presumptions of the characters. "Communication as a whole is predicated on the demonstrable claim that there are common, agreed upon meanings in language, however rich, metaphorical, or symbolic" (Guerin 360).

Technical improvisations and academic enhancements ought to compliment life. If theories are floated and the nuances are neatly negotiated through writings, and if they are treated as successful ventures without directing one towards wellbeing then all architectonics would remain as attractive failures. Written communication must pulsate with emotions and feelings that should influence people the right way. Failures when presented in writings must perfect the imperfect picture that is picturised for the reader. "The core idea of realism is often thought to be that it is possible for human beings to have knowledge that is about the world as it is, that we are not caught in the " prison house of language" (Moya 315). Therefore true power is being able to rationalize and understand what we require to lead a holistic life. The power of writing should highlight reality authentically and enable the reader to change the negatives into positives. *As I Lay Dying* is the life led by the Bundrens in all its superficiality. They never understood the meaning of life and never knew the meaning of love and true bonding. Relationships are not explored and lived to cherish the values that make life worth living. The mother, Addie Bundren is dying and her last moments are captured to construct the life that she had lived and the love she had failed to share within the family. The multiple perspectives of the members of the family and the neighbours are presented to piece the past and weave the episodes to analyze the partial careless dramatic and disturbing life that is led by the Bundren family.

The concept of family life in the modern setting is satirically supplemented with selfishness that is rampant. Narrative technique negotiates the visibility of the vacuum that constricts genuine concerns. The observation and truth that defines the basic principle of relationship is feverishly fished out but is not expressed or enforced to change the patterns practiced in the modern age. The fact is that unless one is loved selflessly and sincerely one will not understand the power of love that needs to be shared within the family. So also, if one has not enjoyed the prime phase of perfect childhood soaked in love then one will not be able to share the same with others or pass it on to the next generations. Unless one evaluates various situations and endorses the need for true bonding that can strengthen, stabilize and sustain lives one will remain confused like Addie and Anse who cannot be role models.

As I Lay Dying humorously and painfully projects the life led in vain by Addie and the Bundrens. Addie never knew the power of love that can be constructive and productive. This lifeless life that she led made her indifferent to life and death. The lack of true involvement and right influence became a great loss to her and she was unable to rectify this great damage till the end of her life. The power of communication was never exercised till her death. Life was wasted on listlessness and unhappiness that at her death her husband and children were preoccupied with their own concerns. Sharing, listening, supporting and caring were qualities that remained strange to the family. It is this strangeness that is spreading savagely across the world.

William Faulkner has projected the insipid and insincere involvement in the family that

has seeped into the society very powerfully. He has used visual communication to vibrate and violently vouch for the damages caused to destroy the delicate design of a family. Assumptions and perceptions prompt the assessment of characters and their actions in the novel and invariably it has to be acknowledged that the emotional bonding within the members is frail, brittle and insignificant. The son Cash makes the coffin even before the mother dies. She sees him work with wood and hears him fix it. The daughter Dewey Dell sits next to the mother and fans but is preoccupied with her pregnancy and abortion. Jewel is violent expressing his disappointments and frustrations by hitting the horse. Darl is imaginative and introspective with keen insight and sharp observation and therefore remains as a threat to Dewey Dell as he reminds her of her secret relationship with Lame. It is through Darl that the reader gets to know that Jewel is an illegitimate child and that Addie had committed adultery

The youngest son Vardaman is childlike and is unable to accept situations and comprehend the concept of death. He feels that his mother remains in the form of a fish. The power of communicating through innovative methods in amazing ways leaves the reader spell bound. The technical tribute is vital to the success of the novel. This power of narration no doubt captivates the attention of the reader. There are fifty nine monologues and fifteen members (members of the family and neighbours) share their thoughts in short, crisp, concise flashbacks. The life of Addie is laid bare, the attitude of the husband Anse is revealed, the anxieties of the children are shared, the detached neighbours and their understanding of Addie is displayed, the reversal of values, the concerns of society, the pseudo spiritual sentiments, the hidden agendas, the secrets, sins and so on are all painted very effectively. At the same time, the complexity of the narration perplexes the reader for the revelation of each individual throws fresh and strange light on Addie Bundren and the life that they lead. "Power is everywhere, ...but nowhere is it clear what power is, how it is made, where it fails or ends, what is outside power, or even how power emerges" (Wolfe 177). The reader therefore is forced to engage in an intellectual exercise where a detached, unbiased and objective analyses of characters needs to be employed. The suspense, struggles, fears, bleakness, violence, disasters, observations all reveal surprising reasons and incredible answers. According to Henry James "The only reason for the existence of a novel is that it does attempt to represent life" (Hazel 36). The challenges faced by the characters are intellectually intrinsic improvisations that are activated through the narrative technique that is unusually unique and arresting.

This technically triumphant text has astonishingly revealed the constricting reality of a restless life. The siblings are not attached to each other but there is a kind of rivalry and envy that exists because of insecurity. Cash making the casket is, may be proud to show his love for his mother by letting her know that she will remain in the coffin he has made perfectly for her to rest. Will this be of comfort to her or will this act hurt her? The reader is supposed to decipher. Anse is like the buzzard making use of the situation, waiting for her to die to bring a new wife. Dewey Dell is hoping to get her abortion done at Jefferson, the place of burial. The neighbours are dramatic in their display of spirituality and are highly critical of the life led by Addie. "I have tried to live right in the sight of God and man, for the honour and comfort of my Christian husband and the love and respect of my Christian children. Not like Addie Bundren dying alone, hiding her pride and her broken heart" (Faulkner 19). They acknowledge her potentials to bake tasty cakes and are worried that if she continues to live their business might become dull.

Addie is seen as an evil spirit whose salvation is impossible. Her friends are deceptive. She is a lonely person in spite of her family and friends. She was not happy with Anse. She always felt that he tricked her. Her connection with her children is peculiar. This strangeness made motherhood a disaster. She was attracted by the act of violence she experienced with the preacher Whitfield and thus embraced sin instead of salvation. Jewel a product of her affair with Whitfield is also violent and he could express love only by beating the horse. He responds to violence and saves his mother's body from the burning barn and from the river. To negate this sinful act with Whitfield Addie gives birth to Vardaman hoping this would replace the child robbed from Anse. This idea to substitute is very significantly displayed while Vardaman replaces his mother with a dead fish. The uncommon philosophy that she practices infects the family in unhealthy ways. This destroys the feelings and emotions that are natural to human beings and leaves life unnatural and absurd. Words turn ineffectual and the process of life becomes ridiculous. Living and dying are inextricably intertwined. Life is not lived but enacted as per their whims and fancies. People are foolish, spiteful, sarcastic, selfish, violent, evil, malicious, deceptive and listless. Due to this "values vanishes, since in a state of chaos important and trivial impulses alike are frustrated" (Richards 44). Power can portray a perfect picture of life when used productively. But unfortunately power is found to corrupt, pollute, manipulate, threaten, force, nullify and negate all that is good.

Nuances in narration have helped in assimilating all the horribly negative thoughts that hamper life. The fifty nine monologues narrated by fifteen members, spaced with the rigorous reality of death offers a gothic touch that troubles the reader. Reflexive characterization is employed. Addie Bundren motivates the journey. Being evasive and trying to escape reality each move in the novel adds to the complexity of the novel. The members of the family want the ordeal of burial to be over. They find distraction by insulating themselves and indulging in odd jobs. For example, Cash finds distraction in carpentry, Dewey Dell in fanning, Jewel in horse and so on. Darl who has rich insight, creativity, imaginative capability is declared as malicious, spiteful and insane. Anse steals money from Cash and takes the ten dollars that belonged to his daughter and sells Jewels horse. Vardaman wants to find out as to what the buzzards do at night. Dewey Dell very foolishly tries various options to reverse her pregnancy that reveals her ignorance and turns things more complex. This death like life is picturised by letting us view the picture of a coffin drawn in the novel. This is an arresting image that conveys the meaning of life in all its dark reality. Darl's unusual assessment of situations and people appear as if he manages to get inside different characters and understands what each one is doing.

One chapter is just left with one sentence and the rest of the page is blank. This silent way of drawing the viewers to participate in the journey undertaken by the Bundrens is startling. The wooden imagery reflects the insensitivity that shrouds the family. Sadistic strength and a feeling of revenge in Addie had forced the family to promise her to bury her at Jefferson. She wanted them to suffer through the journey but the irony is that everyone had a hidden agenda and a personal motive to go to Jefferson. So the family wanted to do away with her so that they could get their things done. Intricate thought process is involved. Addie felt neglected all her life, from the time her father introduced the nihilistic philosophy. Words without actions are a waste according to Addie. She denied the importance and connection with words. Vardaman's primitive mind, the modern world, self deception and the lack of self knowledge are subtly displayed through the journey of the mind. There is no proper vision that people possessed to salvage situations.

Perceptive ability, sensitive awareness to insensitivity, introspection, sensory images and impressions, deep inexpressible love, caricatures of country women, wooden setting and so on makes one question the truth, history, events and the situations. The black humour is well supported by the setting where the house is uphill, off-centre like a haunted house.

Every subjectivity itself is regarded as a product of power structure; power is no longer viewed as an isolable and centralized agency that dominated or coerces subjects that are already there: rather, it is intimately involved in the very production of subjectivities which are then conditioned to regulate themselves. Just as the worlds of objective reality and unified autonomous subjectivity have been dissolved, dissipated through the linguistic and social structures and semiotic codes that ultimately form and define them, so too the conventional worlds of morality and culture in general are viewed as without need, a libidinal economy and self projection (Habib 114).

This anti traditional multiple narration is coupled with an effective animate setting that complicates the search for truth. As Addie dies, the storm rages, the air is sulphurous and the body decomposes. This picture depicts the actual atmosphere that represents life in a state of decay. The road to Jefferson unwinds the true concerns of the family that is in operation under the guise of fidelity.

The entire novel presents the deceptive life led by people in the modern world and their unhappiness. There are no ethical concerns or right spiritual vigour. The architectonics employed aptly suggests the death like situation. William Faulkner has humorously concluded the novel by exposing the careless flippant way in which people viewed life. With the nuances and subtle display of innovative narration if only the facts of right living are enforced. Then the power of the written communication gains real power. Godlessness and pseudo spiritual practices need to be addressed and made functional. Practical applicability of ethical values and moral revolutions has to be enforced into the structure of the novel. This visibility of values can certainly change one's perception and though multiple versions are offered, the power of truth and right living will throw light on the right aspects that enrich lives. Therefore, instead of finding disturbing presentations of life, writings should pave way for progressive transformation.

The power of language can be made functional and productive when the objective is useful to the society. "Theory blotted out the once standard assumption that literature was about human behavior and preoccupied with questions of how to live, presentations which inevitably provide mirrors for the real living" (Cunningham 149-150). The theories that are floated and the aesthetics that attracts may have limited chances of adding happiness to life unless and until it is supported by a permanent glow of positive support system. *As I Lay Dying* pictures life in a distorted fashion. The gloom without any cheerful display erases the glorious progress that can brighten life. The language therefore must be powerful enough to support, guide and sustain the right way. Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* is a helpful literary work that is charged with positive changes.

The Color Purple is also technically unique, employing the epistolary form and adopting the technique of erasure. Here the written word is erased and it remains so in print to present the erased presence of Celie the heroine in a male dominated society. Celie suffers physical and psychological trauma from a very young age and is therefore subjected to humiliation.

She is empowered by Shug Avery the singer and there is a metamorphosis of Celie that transforms people around. The slave narrative is beautifully engaged in making Celie a very strong individual. By introducing the fresh concept of "womanism" Alice Walker presents the power of an uneducated girl who learns to read and write, to think and analyze, to work and become financially self-sufficient and confident with the help of other women. Shug Avery acts as the catalyst that strengthens Celie.

Men like Albert and Harpo understand the value and importance of women towards the end of the novel. This is a great sign that helps women who are weak to muster courage and deactivate their fears and to become aware of reality and stay enlightened too. The power of communication becomes fruitful as the spiritual enhancement is enforced right from the beginning. Celie's letters are all addressed to God and she is thus depending on the right source for her survival. The letters connect Celie to God. "That connection eventually liberates her from a belief in a God outside herself, whom she has always imagined as "Big and old and tall and gray bearded and white," and acquaints her with the God inside herself" (Bloom 73). This is a very crucial message that is conveyed to the society. The singer Shug Avery's songs get replenished with fresh energy when she understands the power of God's love. She learns that, with God's rectification of any kind of damage is possible and the novel proves it. "Samuel, who advises me not to worry, to trust in God, and to have faith in the sturdiness of my sister's soul" (Walker 233). This cleansing force has invited people to review their condition and renew their spiritual strength. This kind of writing that can penetrate and purify the soul remains as a remedy to many unresolved dire situations.

Therefore, it is important to encourage writings that not only disturb and affect but that which builds and nurses the bruises caused in society. The purpose of writing ought to be innovative and transformative. The writings must be thought-provoking and at the same time must make one thoughtful. The artistic presentations in various shades and colours of emotions must be powerful representations that turn life colourful by ceaselessly sifting, segregating and selecting the appropriate shades of life that can offer a blissful and satisfying experience. *As I Lay Dying* is technically energizing and projects the multiple problems through intellectual exercises and unique methods that are psychologically demoralizing. The practical applicability and solution to the miseries remaining invisible do not gain visibility through the characters and their exchanges. Therefore, change is impossible. The power to change, influence and transform the thought process has to be the goal of literary contributions. This is visible in *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker. The metamorphosis and productive changes make the novel functional and applicable. This practicality makes writing useful and it will be a permanent tribute to the society at large. Therefore theories, scientific methodologies, calculations and innovative constructions in writings may fail to deliver people from their struggles and would remain as a fascinating awesome effort that remains detached instead of touching lives and transforming them towards happy and peaceful living. Understanding the need of the hour and enabling the readers to equip and engage themselves effectively in order to contribute positively towards true growth is the true power of writing that is activated through changes that glorify and celebrate life.

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The Neocolonial Power in *The Good Lie*

Abstract

*The paper explores the role of Capitalist America in rescuing the four Sudanese refugees as depicted in the American drama film **The Good Lie**. The film is based on the true story of the “Lost Boys of Sudan”. After their village is destroyed and their parents are killed by Northern militia, Sudanese orphans Theo, his siblings and other survivors make a difficult journey to a refugee camp in Kenya. Thirteen years later, Theo's siblings Mamere, Paul, Jeremiah, and Abital win a lottery and get a chance to settle in the U.S. The first instance of torment occurs when they reach New York. The three brothers are separated from their sister Abital who is asked to leave for Boston where as the brothers are directed to fly to Kansas. They are welcomed in Kansas by their saviour, an American lady, Carrie Davis who is entrusted with the task of finding them jobs. She finds them misfits to live in the 20th century America and takes up the responsibility of civilizing them step by step.*

The main objective of the paper is to analyse the neocolonial elements in the movie. The exploitation, alienation and victimization these refugees are subjected to in the foreign soil are also brought to the limelight. Foucault's statement that certain authorities who possess power in society produce knowledge about those who lack power is relevant in the context of this film. There are many instances in the movie in which knowledge serves the interest of the dominant capitalist groups. The film clearly portrays the difficulties of these three refugees who lack the skill of even using bed, toothbrush, paste, spoon, fork etc. People who lack the power to determine their lives and future also lack the agency. They are either mute or inaudible. Hence, they are powerless subalterns who are in fact the constructs of the dominant group. This power relationship is maintained through certain ideologies. To a great extent, ideology justifies oppression and social inequalities by stating that lower classes have always been inferior. This inferiority and dependency complexes are very much evident in the behaviour of the refugees. The working class becomes the puppets who generate profits for the capitalists; but the illusionary message spread about Capitalism is that it is a generous patron of the working class.

The paper explores the role of Capitalist America in rescuing the four Sudanese refugees as depicted in the 2014, American drama film **The Good Lie** written by Margaret Nagle, and directed by Philippe Falardeau. The film is based on the true story of the *Lost Boys of Sudan*. Thousands of young men fled to refugee camps during the Second Sudanese Civil War. More than 3,000 of these “lost boys” were given the opportunity to settle in the United States. This

is known as the largest of the resettlement of its kind in American history. The film portrays the insecurity and helplessness of Theo and his siblings caused by the civil war in Sudan which resulted in massive massacres. The main characters of this movie are Mamere(Arnold Ocenga, son of a Sudanese Refugee father), Jeremiah (Ger Duang), Paul (Emmaunuel Jal) and Abital (Kuoth Wiel, Sudanese refugee). Paul and Jeremiah were Sudanese refugees and former child soldiers. In 2000, thousands of lost Boys and Girls were transported to the United States. Almost all of them have become American citizens. Many of them have become doctors, engineers, social workers and army officers. Since all these actors have had bitter experiences as refugees, the film succeeds in beautifully and meaningfully depicting the agony of these lost boys.

Colonialism and imperialism have not settled their debt to us once they have withdrawn their flag and their police force from our territories. For centuries the capitalists have behaved like real war criminals in the underdeveloped world. Deportation, massacres, forced labor, and slavery were the primary methods used by capitalism to increase its gold and diamond reserves, and establish its wealth and power.(Fanon 57)

In the postcolonial situations, the problem aggravates with binaries: man/woman , black/white, East/West, native religion/Christianity, ancient/modern, spirituality/materialism and primitive/civilised. If earlier the conflict was between the colonial master and natives, in neo colonial situation the conflict is between the natives: the elite natives and poor natives, the educated natives and uneducated natives, powerful natives and powerless natives. The power is in the hands of the intellectual and powerful natives who dominate over their own people. The political, religious and cultural differences amongst them are not tolerated. This is the root cause of the Civil war of Sudan. The northern region of the country was primarily Muslim, which contrasted ideologically with the Christian and animist religions that were more prevalent in the south. The powerless natives had to run away from the powerful natives for protecting their lives. The powerful natives are economically and intellectually superior because of the colonial education. Hence they repeat the exploitative colonial system.

After their village is destroyed and their parents are killed by Northern militia, Sudanese orphans Theo, his siblings and other survivors make a difficult journey to a refugee camp in Kenya. The hours of silence after the mass killing indicate the mental torture taking place in the minds of young kids who come to know the death of their dear parents. Theo, the eldest among them is the real inspiration for the younger ones. He portrays a kind of maturity and motivates his siblings to live at any cost. They take an oath to live and not to die in spite of the adverse situations. Swollen legs, tired bodies and minds were the result of their 570 mile walk. They also join the group of refugees walking barefoot on the barren land. The African proverb really inspires the life of these young boys. "If you want to go fast, go alone/ If you want to go far, go together". Theo, the chief, has solutions in all adverse situations. It is Theo's quick decision of changing the route which saves the lives of the members of his group. When Mamere wakes up from his sleep and stands up to observe the place, he is spotted unfortunately by the soldiers and immediately he hides beneath the elephant grass. When the soldiers asks him to surrender, Theo gets up to save Mamere . The soldiers think that it is the same boy whom they have seen earlier. Theo had no other way other than following the soldiers. With tearful eyes the young group realises that they have lost their

chief. Abital suggests that Mamere should be their next chief. Power is vital in African societies. Mamere is hardly ten years to shoulder this big responsibility of a chief. The power of the chief in the African community is really commendable. It is important that one person should be there to guide them to avoid mutual accusations and conflicts. In Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God*, the action is primarily seen through Ezeulu's eyes. He wants to assert his power as the chief priest; he dislikes being anybody's puppet. "No! The chief priest of Ulu was more than that, must be more than that. If he should refuse to name the day there would be no festival, no planning, no reaping" (*Arrow of God* 3).

Power is inseparable from the leader in African community, even if it is pre independent Africa or Post independent Africa. In the movie, when the group reaches the Kakuma refugee camp they are provided with food and water. There is much of astonishment in the behaviour and words of these refugees. Seeing a white lady for the first time in her life, Abital asks why some people do not have colour. Paul retorts it is because they do not have a skin. In the refugee camp Paul is seen without wearing a shirt and when his brother asks him the reason, he says that he exchanged it with a pair of footwear. He admits that it is a kind of barter system. The refugee camp becomes a home for them where there are officers in power giving timely orders and instructions. They stay there for thirteen years with the hope of migrating to America one day. Meanwhile Mamere assists the doctors and is able to diagnose medical problems properly.

The boys are in a jubilant mood when they see their names on the list of people selected to go to America. They believe that it is a blessing from God. Power is constituted through accepted forms of knowledge. They are given orientation classes on American weather. They are asked to touch a piece of ice and feel how cold it would be in America. They are trained to be disciplined. Sitting in the aeroplane, Mamere bids farewell to his friends. While other passengers are eating food with spoons and fork, they comfortably eat it with their hands. The dislike they have towards the food is an indication of the adverse situations they will have to face in America.

The first instance of torment occurs when they reach New York. The three brothers are separated from their sister Abital who is asked to leave for Boston whereas the brothers are directed to fly to Kansas. They are welcomed in Kansas by their saviour, an American lady, Carrie Davis who is entrusted with the task of finding them jobs. They strongly expressed their feelings and agony on being separated from their sister. Abital faces the first discrimination in her life from America. Being a woman she is not provided accommodation along with her brothers. "There is no host family for her in Kansas", replies the people in power. The officers state that they are helpless, whereas Paul becomes angry with Mamere for allowing this separation. They become puppets in the hands of administrative authorities who hardly respect their feelings. It is Carrie who comes to pick them up instead of Pamela Lowie, the officer who was earlier assigned the duty. Carrie is further surprised when Mamere asks her about her 'village'. On their way home Jeremiah vomits because of his weak stomach. Pointing to Mac Donalds when Paul asks what it is, Carrie buys food for them from there. It is ironical to note that they are trapped in global consumer culture. Mamere is a matured person who tells Carrie, "May you find a husband to fill your empty home."

When Pamela Lowie explains how to use different gadgets at her home, the three brothers are worried about their sister. "We need our sister back. Is there any authority to speak on that issue?" They are not comfortable in the home initially. They remove the bed from the cot and

place it on the floor. After spreading their mats on the top of it, they sleep over it. They find each and everything strange in the American soil, the bathtub, the shower in the bathroom etc. The film clearly portrays the difficulties of these three refugees who lack the skill of even using bed, toothbrush, paste, spoon, fork etc. They are not familiar with most of the things at home. When Carrie calls them over phone, they do not answer it. The phone bell is misunderstood as an alarm even by Mamere. They even place milk in the flower vase and drink it.

Power becomes a part of social discipline and each society has its own knowledge and truth. The manager of the Waffle House rejects jobs to these three men thinking that they are less efficient and competent in comparison with the whites. “The whites in America had not behaved any differently to them than the white colonisers had to the Africans”(Fanon 153). Carrie asks her friend Jack Forrester who owns a farm to give the refugees some instructions to face an interview. He tells them the importance of smile and the need of impressing the employer.

Disciplinary control does not consist simply in teaching or imposing a series of particular gestures; it imposes the best relation between a gesture and the overall position of the body, which is its condition of efficiency and speed. In the correct use of the body, which makes possible a correct use of time, nothing must remain idle or useless: everything must be called upon to form the support of the act required. A well-disciplined body forms the operational context of the slightest gesture (Foucault 152).

The innocence of these African men is reflected during this conditioning process. Mamere says, “To smile without meaning it, is insincere”. Jack says that the potential employers want them to smile. He admits it is part of “American Bullshit” which they like. They ask the permission to go around the farm. Paul enquires if there is any dangerous animal like the lion to be scared of there. This question makes both Carrie and Jack laugh. The innocence of these three gentlemen is something they compromise for the sake of existence. They are forced to transform even their mindset to fit into the American social structure.

Jeremiah and Mamere are given introductory sessions in the supermarket where they are placed. The disposing of the expired food is justified by the manager of the shop. He says that they do so to avoid the headaches created by the health department. It is even astonishing to note that the fruits and vegetables have expiry dates. They are also shocked to know that there is separate food section for dogs. It is heartbreaking to note the treatment of black people. Thousands of people worldwide are struck with hunger and thirst. Jeremiah feels bad about throwing the expired fruits and vegetables in the thrash can. He feels sadder when he finds a lady picking up those food items. He offers the newly expired food items which he is about to place in the thrash can saying, “They are fresher”. This situation is highly contrasted with the situation which exists in the African countries where people eat cakes and biscuits made of dirt.

When there is difference of opinion between Jeremiah and the manager regarding the issue of expired food given to a woman, Jeremiah removes his official apron and hands it over to his supervisor. According to Jeremiah it is a sin to deny food to those who need it. When Carrie asks him to rejoin the job he says, “I miss Sudan.” He is convinced of the difficulty of getting another job there. Carrie seriously informs him that Nick Costas, the owner of the company vouched for them. Even in such a situation Jeremiah keeps up his spirit

and in humorous way call her “yardie” which means holy white cow. Carrie admits that the bosses in U.S. are sometimes assholes, but they have much power for their tiny brains. They become angry if their orders are not obeyed. The individual bodies are forced to behave in certain disciplined ways as a microcosm of social control.

Paul is a very good mechanic greatly interested in faucet assembling. Two white men of his company realise that he is a skilful mechanic. They slowly introduce him to drugs and he gets addicted to it soon. Unknowingly, he becomes a victim in the hands of the white men. He behaves indifferently to Jeremiah and Mamere. One day when Paul returns home sick, Mamere tries to diagnose his problem. Paul retorts, “Stop pretending like a doctor.” He admits he is not happy and cannot be happy. He also states that they are nothing in America. “Be alone, be nobody”, he screams. This leads to total frustration and depression. The harmony which existed amongst them during the adverse situations is lacking when they have all the facilities in America. The trauma of separation is the root cause for the problems of Paul. In Africa, they worked as a unit, but after being placed in U.S, they work as individuals. These individual spaces create alienation among them.

The assertion of disciplinary power is evident in different situations. The disappointed Paul once uses the public telephone to speak to Abital. When he fails to get connected to her, he bangs the phone and destroys it. Mamere and Jeremiah, along with Carrie come to rescue Paul from the police custody. Mamere scolds Paul and reminds him that he should be grateful to get that opportunity to stay in America which was denied to thousands of African boys. In the case of Mamere, there is no need of force or violence to discipline himself. He has accepted the American norms and standard and lives accordingly. The verbal attack of the two ends in an open fight in the street. The angry Paul blames Mamere for the loss of Theo. Theo made a sacrifice to save his brother. The suppressed feelings and frustrations are reflected when Mamere speaks to Jack. He cries like a small boy. Later Carrie's friend comforts Mamere by saying that it was his brother who made the choice. However, Mamere cannot bear the guilt of his conscience. Paul later asks Mamere to be his brother and not the chief. As a chief it becomes the responsibility of Mamere to assert some power on his subordinates which is disliked by Paul. Power asserted by the people of same gender, colour and family also becomes problematic. It becomes an encroachment to one's private space.

In his famous work, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Foucault speaks of two types of punishment resulting from two types of powers. He distinguishes two types of powers. The sovereign power is the one which is imposed by the king or the ruling party. It is visible power used to control the subjects. The disciplinary power is a tool to control the subjects in the name of discipline. It is about training, exercise and supervision. This is invisible though the objects of power are visible. Prisons, hospitals and schools are all examples for places where the disciplinary power is executed. Violence is not used, but rules play a vital role along with procedures and regulations of behaviours. There are many instances in the film where the disciplinary power is executed. Mamere becomes an agent to execute the discipline among his siblings. It is a new form of colonial domination which is defined as neocolonialism. It does not assert power through violence, but is more dangerous, invisible and insidious. Capitalism reduces all social relations to product- commodity relationship.

It is with the dream of becoming a doctor and living a better life, that Mamere comes to America. He fails to cope up with emotional tensions created. He goes back to his native land

to trace his elder brother, Theo and bring him back to America. Though he is frustrated, he thinks of searching his brother only when Abital speaks of a letter which Theo might have written. But later he realises the difficulty of getting visa for his brother in the post 9/11 context. Though Jack and Carrie, the powerful agents, try their level best to convince the officers in power, they fail. So Mamere decides to go to Nairobi and bring his brother back. It is with much difficulty that he traces Theo, with the help of his old friend James. After fourteen years of separation, the brothers recognise each other through a childhood ancestral game of repeating their grandfathers' names. Only during the last stage of the immigration process in the airport, he reveals to his brother the difficulty of clearing the formalities related to his migration. He forces his brother to travel in Mamere's name using his passport. Theo refuses, but Mamere compels him to return. The good lie which his brother, Theo said during their childhood has saved Mamere's life. Mamere repays his gratitude to his brother by telling another good lie.

The inspiring speech which Jeremiah makes in the church reveals the struggle of the refugees from Africa. He says that as a young boy who lived under the shade of his parents he did not understand the words of his father, "Let something of me survive." But he realised the real meaning of his father's words when his parents were murdered. After their death it was the memories of their forefathers and their teaching which took them forward. He admits that it was an invisible bridge of memories which connects their old life with new one. He says, "They say we were saved by U.S., But we saved each other." He says that they are found boys and not lost boys. "Though the aim of the neo-colonialists is economic domination, they do not confine their operations to economic sphere. They use the colonialist methods of religious, educational and cultural infiltration (Nkrumah 35).

While engaged in Christmas decoration, Paul says, "Santa Claus does not come to Sudan." As a surprise arranged by Carrie, Abital rejoins her brothers on the Christmas eve. This reunion would not have taken place if the powerful white lady had not interfered. The lost boys celebrate their birthdays on the New Year eve. It is ironical to note that even their birthdates are the contributions of the people in power. Abital admits that they do not know when they were born. But she recollects the words of her mother, "Remember who we are and the people who came before us."

Foucault's statement that certain authorities who possess power in society produce knowledge about those who lack power is relevant in the context of this film. Carrie is a supporter of these three gentlemen and she fights in the immigration office for the reunion of the African brothers with their sister. There are many instances in the movie in which knowledge serves the interest of the dominant capitalist groups. People who lack the power to determine their lives and future also lack the agency. They are either mute or inaudible. Hence, they are powerless subalterns who are in fact the constructs of the dominant group. This power relationship is maintained through certain ideologies. To a great extent, ideology justifies oppression and social inequalities by stating that lower classes have always been inferior. This inferiority and dependency complexes are very much evident in the behaviour of the refugees. The working class becomes the puppets who generate profits for the capitalists; but the illusionary message spread about Capitalism is that it is a generous patron of the working class.

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Gender Politics and Cultural Representation: The Dynamics of Power in Women's Magazines

Abstract

Popular culture, constituted of the everyday lives of the masses, encompasses a plethora of practices, artefacts and beliefs that are widely shared. The standards of judgment and ideas of taste that were once formulated through a hierarchical polarization of 'high' and 'low' were gradually recognized as untenable and this realization, coinciding with the growth of Cultural Studies, evolved into an exploration of popular cultural forms as essential sites of signification. Popular culture came to be seen as a space for the interaction and struggle of diverse ideological forces, simultaneously being identified in Gramscian terms, as an instrument of 'hegemony' and also as a medium for resisting dominant cultural forces. The question of 'power' naturally aligns itself with a study of popular culture as power relations are deeply embedded in various cultural representations and identity formations. The meanings and ideas that are thus generated are widely circulated as normal and natural and include aspects of race, class, gender, sexuality, nationality and the like. An attempt to interpret cultural products as 'signs' that either mask or reinforce the politics of power, would certainly unveil the intricacies involved in the creation of 'discourses' as structures of power and their role in determining individual lives and actions. Representational strategies of gender in popular culture are also about negotiations of power and these are intricately woven into a rich tapestry of images, meanings and textual patterns that are representative of patriarchal social formations. The present paper undertakes to examine the extent to which Indian popular cultural texts permit the co-existence of alternate and dissident voices of resistance with hegemonic patriarchal ideologies. An attempt is made to delineate oppositional strands of thought that challenge male-generated discourses. In this regard, the focus would be on a small sample of women's magazines, the intention being to define the method and process of 'gendering' as a practice of power. The paper specifically concentrates on a few popular regional and national level women's magazines so as to analyse the nature of meaning-production and its relation to power and the determination of spatial relations between genders. The attempt is thus aimed at an exploration of the specific context of gender as formulated through a system of representations that are reflective of structures of power.

Women's magazines, which are often characterized as reflecting the vivid dimensions of a woman's experience, exist as significant artifacts of culture that nurture and mold the individual subjectivities of hundreds of women across India. An endeavor to map the different contours of cultural representation with regard to Indian women and to examine it specifically in the context of a popular cultural text such as the 'magazine', would certainly require an understanding of the intricate process of gendering as a manifestation of discourses of power. Right from the title and sometimes even the tagline, women's magazines attempt to position the woman within a specific ideological context, embarking upon the

reformist task of redefining the status of women. Using titles that specifically incorporate a rather glorified signification of the woman as a social category and proceeding with narratives and accounts that are meant to be motivating and inspirational, women's magazines are primarily organized around the central idea of a unique female existence.

Within such a context it almost becomes imperative to delineate the different strands of socio-political thought that are woven into the cultural understanding of the woman. The present paper tries to analyze a small sample of popular women's magazines in terms of their thematic and stylistic content and the multiple levels of meaning they generate in accordance with dominant cultural practices. Women's magazines function as important channels for the communication and dissemination of a plethora of images, meanings and ideas which are in fact instrumental in determining the gendered status of a woman. It therefore remains to be seen whether such magazines allow strategies of resistance against hegemonic patriarchal discourses of power and if it does the extent to which such a prospect is made viable.

Women's magazines are generally 'constructed' around a vision of 'progress' and 'empowerment' meant to be read as signs of independence or enablement. There is thus always the implied suggestion of an ideal subjecthood that women can look forward to by acting, thinking and behaving in particular ways and thus get actualized. It follows therefore that a certain ideological collision would take place pertaining to the contradictory assumptions of gendered hierarchy and resistive power discourse. In this regard the aim would be to discern those instances and possibilities that offer to the woman reader the prospect of transcending social and cultural constraints.

A reading of the two regional women's magazines *Vanitha* and *Grihalakshmi* and the English language women's magazines *Woman's Era* and *Femina* gives sufficient grounds for probing the multiple connotations of the complex politics of gender and their significance to the power-knowledge equation. In each of these magazines such concerns are developed and expressed knowingly or unknowingly through differing techniques and styles of representation. *Woman's Era*, which comes with the tagline 'Builds Happy homes', organizes itself around the concept of woman as a representative of the cultural tradition and serves instructional and cautionary functions through regular articles on conjugal relations, problems of marital adjustment, dangers involved in contemporary trends such as dating, social networking and the like. Articles such as "Conjugal Bliss", "10 Things You Shouldn't Say to Your Partner", "Are You Caught in a Semi Happy Marriage?" are a few examples of the nature of the magazine content. Regular columns like Beauty Queries, Child Challenges, Teenache, Personal problems and I am Pregnant are meant to address specifically women's issues.

Femina, with regard to its glossy appeal, price and also the nature of its content tends to target the urban upper middle class woman and comes with the tagline "For all the women you are". The very structure of the magazine seems tailor-made for the demands of the elite section of women and primarily focuses on fashion, beauty, sex, relationships, celebrities, gossips and also a liberal dose of glamour. But there are also articles which are intended to be thought-provoking for women such as "Real life Shocker" and also stories of women who have reached the top along with creative space for women in the form of poems and stories. However the reader is bombarded with a large amount of images related to fashion and style that the woman reader is led to believe in a world where what matters most for the woman is to look good with a perfectly toned body matched with appropriate sexy clothing and

accessories. The female body is represented in a way that promotes the objectification of women as objects of male desire. Just as in *Woman's Era* regular features may also be found such as “Skin queries” and “*Femina* reader service” that appear with the intention of offering solutions to various 'problems' tormenting women.

The two regional magazines *Vanitha* and *Grihalakshmi* contain many similarities with these English magazines with regard to their content but also markedly differ from them in terms of their style and presentation. Just as in *Woman's Era* there is a conscious attempt here to situate the woman within the social set up of the family and also to affirm the socio-cultural implications of such an association. Again similar to *Woman's Era* there lies the implication that these magazines do not want themselves be restricted to just women but prefer a wider audience including men as well. Articles centering on celebrities, debates on topics of contemporary relevance, instructional features on building good and economical homes, financial management and investment plans are some such. However features on beauty, skin and healthcare occur prominently along with woman-specific topics such as pregnancy. Mothering and good parenting and childcare are also important thematic concerns for these magazines and appear in varied forms across issues much like the major section on kitchen recipes. However no specific space is allotted for women to express their creative and literary abilities except for a regular recipe column that features selected entries from the readers. Unlike the English language magazines which include film news and star interviews as a separate feature for entertainment, both the Malayalam magazines project it as their major selling point, often including it as the main story for a particular issue and this may probably have something to do with the general appeal of these magazines. Articles on travel destinations, pilgrimage centers, food habits, healthy living etc are intended to add to the heterogeneity in the audience.

A brief analysis of these magazines offers useful insights regarding the positioning of the woman as a cultural signifier. It also leads us to the different paradigms of gender representation and their increasing significance in a 21st century world. The idea of the new age woman who has come a long way from a traditional cocooned existence to one of independence and enablement is projected through inspirational articles and stories, for instance, on successful women entrepreneurs to accounts of women who have made a mark of their own by taking the less travelled path. Profiles of accomplished women who have battled the trials and tribulations of life with their unwavering commitment to their ideal are also presented so as to emphatically declare the resilience and willpower of women. There is thus an attempt made to proclaim the increasing amount of women entering the public sphere and of simultaneous changes in the societal conception of the female world on account of the increasing avenues for self-fulfillment now available for women.

The question however remains as to whether the cultural representation of women through images, ideas and signs genuinely attempt to challenge and resist authoritative power structures, especially those of patriarchy or do they merely end up reinforcing the existing power relationships pertaining to gender. The pro-women features that these magazines supposedly incorporate are rather contradicted by the inherent oppositions in the ideological positioning of the woman as independent and modern. Pierre Macherey's observation that the speech of a book is shaped by certain “silences” and “absences” is relevant in this context. “The speech of the book comes from a certain silence, a matter which it endows with form, a ground on which it traces a figure. Thus, the book is not self-sufficient;

it is necessarily accompanied by a *certain absence*, without which it would not exist. A knowledge of the book must include a consideration of this absence” (85). Viewed in this light, it may be said that the unconscious content of the cultural text of the magazine contains within itself an awareness of the flaw and incoherence in the very ideology that it tries to uphold. The paradoxical situation arises when the same text that exhorts the woman to take up a pre-determined subject position within the ideological context of independence also tends to distance itself from that ideology by means of conscious or unconscious suggestions of opposition.

These texts constitute a 'discourse' made up of elements that are both products and propagators of 'power' or social forces. This may be well exemplified by instances taken from the samples for study. When on the one hand they extol the conception of women as empowered, through tales and narratives of financial, emotional and creative fulfillment, on the other hand their reformatory nature pales into insignificance when set alongside repeated attempts to conform to normative expectations of gender. The societal construction of femininity presupposes a fixed and stable identity for the woman that would also cater to the dominant patriarchal familial ideology. This is evident in the prominence given to women's roles and duties with regard to institutional practices surrounding the family, and connoting meanings about women as instruments for the maintenance of social well-being. Such notions of an essentialist identity have, however, been challenged by post-structuralist thinkers like Judith Butler, the famous American theorist. She put forward the concept that gender is “performative” ie masculinity or femininity is the result of a patriarchal performance or role by the individual which is accepted and validated by the society:

That gender reality is created through sustained social performance means that the very notions of an essential sex and a true or abiding masculinity or femininity are also constituted as part of the strategy that conceals gender's performative character and the performative possibilities for proliferating gender configurations outside the restricting frames of masculinist domination and compulsory heterosexuality (192-193).

It has also to be added that “the family has become more than ever a site where dramatic social inequalities have deepened and reproduce themselves” (Segal 261). Articles on family relations, marital problems, good parenting, childcare and familial health take the centre stage and almost confine the woman reader to a male-generated restrictive world of limited desires and avenues for self-realization.

The woman is also commoditized as an object of beauty, as someone who has to be made conspicuous by her capacity to exude charm, graciousness and also sexual appeal. Equally prominent is the image of the woman as a good homemaker, which is again meant to reinforce the cultural stereotype of femininity. Moreover the advertisements featured also contribute much to the valorization of this feminine ideal. The wide range of products that are marketed are also items with which women are conventionally associated and include cosmetics, fine clothing, jewellery, kitchen appliances and utensils. Here is thus a juxtaposition of the social categorization of woman with an array of market goods thus hinting at a consumerist outlook that views women as products meant for consumption. The pertinent question that arises out of all these is regarding the legitimacy of the image of the woman that is idealized, especially in a context in which human realities and prospects are changing. One would be reminded of the question that Betty Friedan asks in her *The*

Feminine Mystique:

Why, with the removal of all the legal, political, economic, and educational barriers that once kept woman from being man's equal, a person in her own right, an individual free to develop her own potential, should she accept this new image which insists she is not a person but a 'woman', by definition barred from the freedom of human existence and a voice in human destiny? (68)

While studying women's magazines as important forms of cultural discourse, it becomes imperative to examine the role they play in creating and disseminating a shared sense of identity and belonging for the woman. With respect to the politics of gender and the intricate play of patriarchal power, it has to be said that popular cultural texts such as the magazine offer a space for serious socio-cultural scrutiny. Magazines do play a significant role in subjectivity formation and are also capable of modulating the social positioning of the woman. However, it may also be noted that they do not offer anything that is liberatory or transformative for women as patriarchal hegemony subtly works through the content and stylistic make-up of these magazines and the prospect of an alternative counter-discourse of resistance is contained and subsumed within power structures generated by dominant and authoritative discursive formations of patriarchy. What is very often emphasized, irrespective of language, in most of these women's magazines, is the traditional role of the feminine. Thus they become the key signifiers of gendered roles which affirm normative implications of femininity and consolidate traditional binaries. The dichotomy between tradition and modernity reflected through the structural and contextual framework of these magazines is greatly conditioned by the intricate and complex interplay of ideological discourses of patriarchal power. Popular cultural texts thus become instruments for the perpetuation of conservative parameters and images related to the woman. The cultural representation of the woman involves a gendered expression of reading positions and subjectivities negotiated through the institution of patriarchy thus also ensuring the maintenance of instruments of power.

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'Madness' as a Language of Resistance: A Psychological Reading of Ganga in *Manichitrathazhu* and Rani in *Nagamandala*.

Abstract

The paper titled 'Madness as a Language of Resistance; A Psychological Reading of Ganga in Manichitrathazhu and Rani in Nagamandala', tries to explore how 'women's madness', and the relation between husband and wife take form/incarnation through prevailing cultural practices and the tools and activities of social control institutions. This has been done by taking for analyses the female protagonists, Ganga of the Malayalam movie Manichitrathazhu and Rani of Girish Karnad's play Nagamandala. A psychofeministic study had been made to explore the hidden nuances of the minds of these characters. Through this kind of a study of these female characters I try to assert that the inclination of women towards madness is often their tool for resistance against the dominating patriarchal power structure. I also try to expose the bewilderment of women, after their encounter with the truth of marriage which utterly shatters their mythical concepts of 'for ever lived happily' constructs, which ultimately lead them to delusion or madness.

Freud had observed that unconscious constructs of the mind were found to consist desires or wishes which derive their energy directly from the primary physical instincts. He has also perceived that the intrusion into conscious thinking of mechanisms that belong properly to the primary process accounts for the oddity of many normal and pathological mental events. And we can see that in the case of Rani and Ganga, it is their suppressed physical or sexual desire that forces them to take refuge in the armor of madness. Both Ganga and Rani had been grown up as simple village girls with all the chains of morality. Thus they can never consciously allow themselves to slip away from the idol of a chaste wife. Ganga, from the many instances in the movie we understand that, longs for an aesthetically sensitive husband whereas Rani longs for a fairy tale like Prince to sweep her off the feet and fly to a distant paradise.

When they both realize that they have fallen in love with someone else other than their husband a conflict occurs between the conscious and the unconscious mind. And the result is Ganga gets incarnated into Nagavalli and Rani takes refuge in the concept of Naga, which is both a divine and a phallic symbol. So it is through this apparatus of madness that these two characters keep themselves bound to the traditional idol of chaste and pure 'wifedom' at the same time giving an outlet to their suppressed inner urges.

No paper on psychological reading will be complete without mentioning Sigmund Freud, so let me begin the paper by revising the thoughts put forward by Freud on mind, dreams and madness. According to Freud the unconscious contents of the mind were found to consist wholly in the activity of trends like desires or wishes which derive their energy directly from the primary physical instincts. They function quite regardless of any consideration other than

that of obtaining immediate satisfaction, and are thus liable to be out of step with those more conscious elements in the mind which are concerned with adaptation to reality and the avoidance of external dangers. Since, moreover, these primitive trends are to a greater extent of a sexual or of a destructive nature, they are bound to come in conflict with the more social and civilized mental forces. Investigations along this path were what led Freud to his discoveries of the long-disguised secrets of the sexual life of children and of the Oedipus complex.

In the second place, his self-analyses led him to an inquiry into the nature of dreams. These turned out to be, like neurotic symptoms, the product of a conflict and a compromise between the primary unconscious impulses and the secondary conscious ones. By analyzing them into their elements it was therefore possible to infer their hidden unconscious contents; and, since dreams are common phenomena of almost universal occurrence, their interpretations turned out to be one of the most useful technical contrivances for penetrating the resistances of neurotic patients. Finally, Freud perceived that the intrusion into conscious thinking of mechanisms that belong properly to the primary process accounts for the oddity not only of dreams but of many other normal and pathological mental events.

In the traditional discursive construction of heterosexuality, 'man' is positioned as powerful, and 'woman' as passive and beholden to man. The institutionalized couple they together form is positioned as immune from scrutiny or intervention from outside. At the same time, 'man' is idealised as the answer to a woman's dreams: the fairy tale prince who will sweep her off her feet; 'Mr Right' who will bring happiness, contentment and fulfillment of her heart's desires – the 'happy ever after' ending we are promised at the end of romantic fiction and fairy tales.

However, it is also acknowledged that this relationship can result in violence, oppression and neglect. The traditional discursive representation of heterosexuality provides an explanation for this experience that ensures that many women stay: the myth of 'Beauty and the Beast'. We are taught that a good woman can always tame or transform the monstrous brute or beast; through her ministrations, for example the frog will turn into the prince, the violent man into the charming thoughtful lover.

The woman who can't enact this transformation is positioned as to blame; she must try harder, be more self-sacrificing, or attempt with greater vigour to be the 'perfect woman'. Even if she fails, though, and the beast is never transformed, we are reminded by the fairy stories and by romantic fiction that underneath it all the brute is a vulnerable and needy man, and that he is the most sexy or desirable partner a woman could find. And if all else fails, women still have the hope that motherhood will provide true fulfilment, as will the security of knowing that they are safe within the boundaries of a 'normal' heterosexual life.

It is one of the explanations put forward for why women stay in unhappy, neglectful or violent relationships with men, and arguably one of the explanations for why women internalize marital or family difficulties as depression, or madness. Women are taught to gain happiness through relationships, invariably with men. They are also taught that it is their fault if a relationship fails.

The psychological analyses of women's madness should include analyses of the ways in which women blame themselves for problems in relationships, and psychological explanations for why this is so, incorporating factors such as low self-esteem, depression, the

impact of previous neglect or abuse, guilt, shame, fear of loss or separation, and the idealisation both of heterosexuality and of men. It would include an analysis of psychological defences, such as repression, denial, projection or splitting, as mechanisms for dealing with difficulty or psychological pain. For example, we see evidence of splitting in the way women see themselves, or their man, as all good or all bad, with no acknowledgment that everyone can exhibit both positive and negative characteristics at the same time, or in the way women blame themselves, or their bodies, for problems which they experience. It would also include women's internalisation of the idealised fantasy of motherhood, and of the expectations of being 'woman' in a heterosexual social sphere.

Ganga in the Malayalam movie *Manichitrathazu* and Rani in Girish Karnad's *Nagamandala* are two women characters who armed themselves with madness as a tool of resistance. They both grew up by getting injected with the notions of idealized 'womanhood'. But once they entered the chastised real 'wifehood', it shattered all their hitherto cherished dream of a wife. Let us analyse how madness becomes a tool to fight against patriarchal power taking these two characters one by one.

'Nagavalli' is a name that created a space of her own in the realm of female psyche growing beyond the limitations of a character. Ganga's transformation to Nagavalli cannot be seen just as an extension of her psychic disorder of her childhood. In fact both incidents of madness in the life of Ganga should be seen in the light of a woman's attempt to escape from her suppressed emotions. All psychic disorders for that matter are the safety valves that the subconscious mind open up to give an outlet to pent up emotions. Madness or abnormality is a language of resistance.

Now the immediate question would be, what is it that provoked Ganga- who enjoys all freedom from Nakulan, her husband, who for a common spectator is nothing less than an ideal husband- to transform herself to Nagavalli?

The first stroke for the need to transform comes when Bhasuri (KPAC Lalitha) narrates the story of Nagavalli, her forbidden love, and finally the murder of Nagavalli and Ramanadan by the Chieftain Thampi, to Ganga. Ganga who is a 'sahrdaya' at once strikes a 'tadatmya' with Nagavalli and her suppressed emotions. It soon attains another dimension when Bhasuri reveals that now in that house of Ramanadan dwells the great poet Mahadevan and that he is going to marry Alli.

Ganga who had been a great admirer of the poet Mahadevan is so excited to discover that her idol of worship is now incarnated in person and is very close to her. Not only that, Alli, an ordinary village girl is going to enjoy the bliss of marrying Mahadevan. This is something Ganga could not stand. Her immediate reaction reveals her over excitement mixed with at most jealous for Alli whom she teases after herself exposed to the truth.

From here on step by step we can see the changes that occur in Ganga. The song reveals some more truths – Ganga's dissatisfaction as a wife, Nagulan's inability to fulfill Ganga's feminine needs, his failure to conceive Ganga with all her aesthetic sensibility, which unconsciously paves way for her to keep the doors open in await of her dreams fulfillment.

But at the same time Ganga having grown up as a simple village girl with all the chains of morality can never ever admit to herself that she is falling in love with Mahadevan. Ganga who would never allow herself to slip away from the idol of a chaste wife by all means should get incarnated into another form, which happens through Nagavalli. It is through Nagavalli

alone Ganga could resist her suppressed femininity while keeping Ganga still the loving , chaste wife of Nagulan.

We can also see that, Nagavalli tries to remove the two obstacles on her way to achieve love's fulfillment. They are Alli and Nagulan. Alli, in order to free Mahadevan from the knot of marriage and Nagulan, in order to free Ganga from the already knotted marriage.

Coming to Rani, an innocent rustic girl of Girishkarnad's *Nagamandela* , a young girl who was snatched away from the warming wings of her parents to lead an utterly lonely life of the wife of an indifferent unemotional husband, Appanna who is always dotted to a concubine. Right from the beginning we get glimpses of Rani plunging into the world of hallucination in order to overcome her loneliness. She creates an illusionary world of gardens, heavens, prince and her own parents who rescues her from all calamities. So Rani asks,

'where are you taking me'? And the eagle answers: 'Beyond the seven seas and seven isles on the seventh island is a magic garden. And in that garden stands the tree of emeralds. Under the tree your parents wait for you'. So Rani says: 'Do they? Then please, please take me to them immediately'. 'Here I come'. So the eagle carries her clear across the seven seas.... (Indian Blossom , 74)

At another occasion she dreams herself sleeping between her parents "Don't worry', they promise her. 'We won't let you go away again ever!' In the morning, the stag with the golden antlers comes to the door. He calls out to Rani. She refuses to go. 'I am not a stag', he explains, I am a prince'.... , (Indian Blossom 75).

So it is a prince she longs in the heart of her heart. Thus these primary hallucinations soon give way to reality when she takes up a secret lover in the form of a naga. When Ganga was getting transformed to Nagavalli to give expression to her unfulfilled femininity Rani was protecting her chastity by making herself believe that she was making love with her own husband while all the time she very well knew it's not her husband. She also takes refuge in the concept of Naga. Naga as we know, has a divinity according to hindu believes. And one need not bother much of the social moralities to keep a relation with divine powers. Naga is also a phallic symbol. So the whole drama of naga is nothing but the externalization of Rani's inner urges whose fulfillment she seeks.

Karnad gives us hint that Kappanna, Kurudavva's son too has some hallucination of an affair with a naga woman. On one side Kappanna often has a vision of this naga woman and keeps a secret relation with her, and on the other side Rani has a secret extra marital relation with a naga man. When we put these two incidents together a picture emerges that of both Kappanna and Rani having a secret relationship may be with each other or with someone else. But they both strive hard to make themselves believe that they don't do anything immoral. The final disappearance of Kappanna at a crucial moment of Rani's ordeal too strengthens the doubt of a relation between Kappanna and Rani.

It is true that 'story' concludes Rani's story with a note of Rani leading a happy life with her husband and son by giving her back her happiness.... When all people are gone Appannatoo falls at her feet and says,

Forgive me, I am a sinner. I was blind. She gently takes him in her arms. Thus she gets everything. Appanna becomes a devoted husband, Appanna's

concubine becomes her maid servant. In due course, Rani gives birth to a beautiful child. A son. Rani lived happily ever after with her husband, child and servant (Indian Blossom, 110).

But we should remember that though not whole heartedly the reason for Appanna to transform to a devoted husband was because Rani was elevated to a position of a Goddess. Appanna prepares his mind to conceive it otherwise it is not possible for him to respect her.

The most interesting thing is that both stories conclude with the female protagonist (Ganga and Rani) gets relieved off all her attempt to escape from the chains of marriage. And both could retain the purity of a chaste wife. The creators of these two characters being men and we the readers/audience being the product of patriarchal societies, we too give out the sigh of relief when Ganga finally falls to the bosom of Nagulan and Rani leads a happy life with her real husband Appanna.

But can the Nagavallies be nailed and locked with a 'manichitrthazhu' for ever and ever...? Nagavallies will begin to dance --- the real THANDAVA.

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Why Alternative Modernity in India? The Relevance and Reflections On Kannada Modernity with Reference to Vachana Movement

Abstract

It is important to explore the possibility of multiple streams of vernacular modernities that interrogate the notion of singular modernity. Contemporary writers and critics in recent studies and writings have challenged the notion of singular modernity that developed along with colonialism and capitalism and critiqued the existing understanding on modernity. By tracing alternative sense of modernity in Indian literary context there can reveal the regional tradition of resistance and subversion. The importance and the status of alternative modernities lay in the critical engagements of indigenous modernities, which are different from one another at different national and cultural societies. The rich cultural and literary traditions of the other nations contribute to their own modernity, which is not what the West defines. The recognition of the indigenous modernity through the cultural and literary adaptations and transformations from the global in to the local helped to think alternatively about the regional modernities. The different historical conditions of Indian society formed different sense of modernization. The historical reality of refutation of accessing Sanskrit language to margins and margins refused upper-class as their interlocutors made Indians conceive their own sense of modernity. The social base of their new language of modern or postmodern is only remained confined to educated urban upper class elites. On the other hand the emancipatory language of lower class is modern in content. The evolving revolutionary movements of margins in India, even today, pinpoint the importance of a distinct development of modernity.

As part of the research on above argument, I would like to trace Kannada modernity and its development in this context of alternative modernities. Kannada literary tradition has been developed with an accurate feeling of vernacularity. In the beginning itself Kannada writers tried to liberate their vernacular from the domination of classical languages like Sanskrit and Prakrit. By translating and adapting Sanskrit literary source, they laid the foundation of Kannada literary tradition in the 8th century AD. The invention of new literary forms like Vachana later contributes largely to the development of literary tradition. Later on Vachana genre was build on Vachana movement, which brought revolutionary shift in the history of Kannada literature. Vachana movement is referred to the literary form called Vachana (utterance or statement), which is a kind of “new communicative form...along with a new religious practice. It is often called also the Veerasaiva movement, in acknowledgement of the religious group that adopted the vachana as one of its principal genres. Along with this new literary form and religious practice, a whole range of new images and radical propositions came into being, marking this moment as one of profound discontinuity.

It was an impassioned revolt against the dominant organized religious institutions and practices of the period. This movement occurred in the last days of the weakened Chalukya dynasty, which ruled from the city of Kalyana...Basavanna, a senior official in charge of the

treasury in the court of Bijjala, was a Saiva Barhaman by birth who revolted against Brahminism, threw away the sacred thread, and identified himself with a newly arisen reformist cult within Saivism whose nature remains as yet unclear to scholars. Basavanna was undoubtedly the chief organizer of the Vachana movement. The attitude of equal religio-literariness among the Vachanakaras marked a great shift in the tradition of Kannada literary history. With this kind of literature new forms of reasoning emerged to negotiate the domination of Sanskrit. Thus Vachanakaras had translated the ideal of the moral economy of literature into reality by taking the very act of poetry away from the court and relocating it among relocating among religious intellectuals who were not absorbed in to established institutions, by which they formed an alternative sense of modernistic attempt. As a strong follower of Basavanna and Vachana movement, Dr. Kalburgi who writes against the social evils and for the margins, shot dead because of his voice for the lower class people and their miseries by the hands of religious fundamentalists recently. In this socio-literary context, it is important to look at the status of Kannada regional modernity, which has been developed with the writings of writers of the past Basavanna and writers of the present Dr. Kalburgi, Dr. K S Bhagavan etc.

We live in a world of distinct societies and cultures which always contributed to form a distinct way of life and understanding the world. The multi-cultural and multi-layered feature of the societies played a crucial role in forming the diverse cultural and literary identities in distinctive ways. These multiple features affect every literary and socio-cultural movements and transformations. This is also can be seen in the emergence of modernity all over the world. The world defined modernity in different ways in different time and space according to the cultural and political explorations of every nation. There are so many modernities and modernisms in our world. How these modernities and modernistic thoughts are evolved differently in different socio-cultural contexts, is very important. Modernity has global impact, which is mediated by the historical and cultural backgrounds of each society and those modernistic thoughts have highly related to the cultural and ideological institutions of individual societies. The cultural and historical diversities of societies offered multiple modernities and asked to think alternative modernities.

It is important to explore the possibility of multiple streams of vernacular modernities that interrogate the notion of singular modernity. Contemporary writers and critics in recent studies and writings have challenged the notion of singular modernity that developed along with colonialism and capitalism and critiqued the existing understanding on modernity. By tracing alternative sense of modernity in Indian literary context there can reveal the regional tradition of resistance and subversion. The importance and the status of alternative modernities lay in the critical engagements of indigenous modernities, which are different from one another at different national and cultural societies. The rich cultural and literary traditions of the other nations contribute to their own modernity, which is not what the West defines. The recognition of the indigenous modernity through the cultural and literary adaptations and transformations from the global in to the local helped to think alternatively about the regional modernities. The different historical conditions of Indian society formed different sense of modernization. The historical reality of refutation of accessing Sanskrit language to margins and margins refused upper-class as their interlocutors made Indians conceive their own sense of modernity. The social base of their new language of modern or

postmodern is only remained confined to educated urban upper class elites. On the other hand the emancipatory language of lower class is modern in content. The evolving revolutionary movements of margins in India, even today, pinpoint the importance of a distinct development of modernity.

As part of above argument, the paper will trace Kannada modernity and its development in this context of alternative modernities. Kannada literary tradition has been developed with an accurate feeling of vernacularity. In the beginning itself Kannada writers tried to liberate their vernacular from the domination of classical languages like Sanskrit and Prakrit. By translating and adapting Sanskrit literary source, they laid the foundation of Kannada literary tradition in the 8th century A D. The invention of new literary forms like Vachana later contributes largely to the development of literary tradition. Later on Vachana genre was build on Vachana movement, which brought revolutionary shift in the history of Kannada literature. *Vachana* movement is referred to the literary form called *Vachana* (utterance or statement), which is a kind of “new communicative form...along with a new religious practice. It is often called also the *Veerasaiva* movement, in acknowledgement of the religious group that adopted the *vachana* as one of its principal genres. Along with this new literary form and religious practice, a whole range of new images and radical propositions came into being, marking this moment as one of profound discontinuity.

It was an impassioned revolt against the dominant organized religious institutions and practices of the period. This movement occurred in the last days of the weakened Chalukya dynasty, which ruled from the city of Kalyana...Basavanna, a senior official in charge of the treasury in the court of Bijjala, was a Saiva Barhaman by birth who revolted against Brahminism, threw away the sacred thread, and identified himself with a newly arisen reformist cult within Saivism whose nature remains as yet unclear to scholars. Basavanna was undoubtedly the chief organizer of the Vachana movement. The attitude of equal religio-literariness among the Vachanakaras marked a great shift in the tradition of Kannada literary history. With this kind of literature new forms of reasoning emerged to negotiate the domination of Sanskrit. Thus Vachanakaras had translated the ideal of the moral economy of literature into reality by taking the very act of poetry away from the court and relocating it among relocating among religious intellectuals who were not absorbed in to established institutions, by which they formed an alternative sense of modernistic attempt. In this socio-literary context, it is important to look at the status of Kannada regional modernity, which has been developed with the writings of writers of the past Basavanna.

The beginning of modernity traced back when local speech forms were newly dignified as literary languages and entered into the negotiation with the dominant Sanskrit tradition. Sheldon Pollock in his introduction to the *Languages of the Gods* raised a comment on Indian modernity as “if one of the defining or enabling features of European modernity was the vernacularization of the cultural and political spheres, the same occurred in south Asia altogether independently of European influence. Not only did Indian pre-modernity contain elements of European modernity but in the some key areas of culture, such as the analysis of language, it might even be said to have provided a stimulus to the development of that modernity” (9). The richness, variety and alternative values that Indian literature encompasses contribute to the development of alternative modernities in India, which Mohanty says that it is a part of interdisciplinary project. The dominant modernity that west defined is not what we know today. The great tradition of puranas, Vedas and other ancient

works and the cultural and political thoughts they offered are make us to think and act alternatively. The modern values that pre-colonial Indian literary tradition encompasses are later becomes the alternative locus for act and think in Colonial and post-colonial periods in India. The literary movements and productions of pre-colonial India have to be placed in the context of complex matrix of socio-cultural and political order in modern India that suggested research on how these early literary productions/traditions are contributes to the development of alternative and multiple modernities in regional literatures.

In Indian scenario, the elements of modern thoughts have been present even in pre-colonial vernacular literatures. Pre-colonial Indian literary texts have the power to generalize and document human miseries from the position of an unnatural observer. The recent analysis of the literary texts and culture opened up new distinctly modern ideas and values, which are contribute to the development of alternative modernities that shows how those modern thoughts were produced in the contexts other than the West. According to Mohanty, “literary and canonical texts, both canonical and popular or “folk” can play a major role in this revisionary analysis, revealing the alternative and non-dominating layers of modernity to which scholars have remained blind” (2). So we can say that the Indian modernity is continued with the past not a break from the past. The great tradition of modernity in pre-colonial Indian literature forced to think about alternative modernities and regional modernities. Explicit views of the recent scholars on alternative modernities reveal the importance of pre-colonial literary culture and its intensive analysis. Tilottama Misra “contests the idea that a modern historical consciousness within India was something that came in the wake of British colonialism, argues instead that elements of modernity were present in precolonial Assamese literature and that these elements remained providing a crucial alternate locus for thinking acting during the colonial period” (180). The early Indian literature had provided the basic platform to act and think in the colonial period and they tried to develop alternate models according to other culture. So it is inadequate that the colonial and Eurocentric approaches to understand Indian society and literature. In this crucial point, it is necessary to develop an alternative approach to know India.

Kannada language and literature has developed with the sheer attempt of vernacularization and with the thoughts of nationalism in Karnataka. The encounter between Sanskrit and vernaculars of the period has been continued even after the colonial rule in Indian context. To stand independent regional literatures used Sanskrit and Prakrit literary models and movements by which they established their literary and cultural freedom. This self-criticizing power of literary products itself marked the beginning of modernistic ideas in Indian literary tradition. The rich tradition of modernity in pre-colonial literatures has been possible through rewritings and translations.

The written inscriptions played a major role in Kannada literary tradition, which represent a body of social knowledge and acted as a self- conscious agent and political institution, which triggers the feeling of indigenous literature among the public. In the early periods all Kings expressed their political agendas in Sanskrit and Prakrit in Karnataka, which posed great difficulties to the common man to understand authority. Slowly Kannada began to be used for documentary purpose in inscriptions. The *Halmidi* inscription consisted of four lines of document in Kannada vernacular. Later on the proportion of Kannada documents gradually increased. The Rastrakutas marked a great shift where the number of Sanskrit documents reduced to fifteen percent from eighty percent. The Kannada

intellectuals began to experiment with the vernacular as a literary language and replaced Sanskrit with Kannada for political expressions. The need for the textualization of vernacular, thus later produced a body of literary creations in Kannada. The political inscriptions have influenced on the literary expressions of the state, which was later reflected in the translations of great writers. The inscriptions came to be known as “public narratives” (Nagaraj, 324). The available inscriptions of Karnataka themselves explored the notion of self polity and religious ideas. They are the main factors for the first wave of vernacularization in Karnataka. The literary productions of the time are the results of this vernacular politics. “The accumulated materials of these public narratives in the linguistic, ideological and stylistic spheres has a very complex bearing on the making and consolidation of what constitutes the literary in the history of Kannada literary culture” (Nagaraj, 324) Up to the beginning of the 5th century, Kannada language was used for documentary and inscriptions, which lead to the political and cultural tensions in the state. Kannada intellectuals realized the inadequacy of the inscriptions to present modern ideas and thoughts on the construction of a social type. *Halmidi* record had emphasized on the notion of individual as the hero of community. *Sravana Balagola* inscription asserts on the importance of individuality by describing the journey of a saint named Nandisena to Devaloka, the world of Gods, where Nandisena's individual attempt of reaching Devaloka, unattainable to a human being, reveals the other's individuality.

The vernacular inscriptions awakened the minds of the public, offering them the knowledge of political and cultural freedom and individual existence. The modernistic awakening triggered the autonomous literary creations and produced a body of vernacular literature. The modernistic elements of inscriptions like democracy and self individuality with the notion of 'hero of the community' (ranges from peasant to prince), these forms of reasoning and feeling of indigeneity are what trigger the epic imagination among the writers, which build on later. With the consciousness of epic, they began to produce epic poetries, *luakika* (worldly) and *agamika* (scriptural). The results of this literary consciousness are the literary creations of great poets like Pampa, later known as *adikavi* (primal poet), whose composition shows the references of inscriptions through translations and adaptations. In order to produce literary texts, poets of the time adopt verses from the available inscriptions, where began the intra-cultural and inter-lingual transmissions, where we can situate the beginning of translational act from one language to another. “The *laukika* and *agamika* modes of creativity developed by Kannada poets of the 10th century were imaginative efforts at poeticizing the material that was already available in inscriptions. This way of reading literary texts also opens up the question of the relationship between codified forms of subjectivity in the public imagination and ways of bringing them into literary space” (Nagaraj, 325). The greatness of the early poets lies in the way they use that knowledge in their creative works. Many inscriptional images reached great heights in epics in the 10th century with the same aesthetic and ideological purpose in inscriptions.

The moment of vernacularization, is when a language and its literary and cultural tradition achieves a new kind of dignity and responsibility. Kannada vernacularization is a response to the hierarchical power of Sanskrit, which formed a literary discourse; Sheldon Pollock puts it as “it was the discourse of exclusion that had a vast number of *bhasas*, the vernaculars, out of the sphere of literary production”. (Pollock, 32) Kannada language crossed the sanctioned boundaries and it was used to higher forms of literary productions. And thus it begins that the language and style of Sanskrit political poetry gradually being

domesticated to the ways of Kannada language. “ The first text in south Asia- perhaps anywhere- that self consciously theorizes the relationship between vernacular and cosmopolitan ways of literary practice, the *Kavirajamaarga* (C 875)” (Pollock, 330). *Kavirajamaarga* or The Way of the King Poets was written in the reign of Nripatunga Amoghavarsha. It is considered as the first text in World culture to theorize a vernacular poetics. *Kavirajamaarga* shows the influence of Sanskrit literary tradition; the author salutes Banabhatta, the greatest of Sanskrit prose stylist.

The creation of a new language out of spoken forms, and its transformation into a sophisticated medium for larger purposes, are consciously reflected upon and theorized in several texts in Kannada after the 9th century. Even though Kannada becomes a natural language, the problem of choice existed. It was only after the 10th century that Kannada came to be seen as a natural option, something that is evident in the new celebratory reflexivity that characterizes the Kannada poet. There are certain ideologies that operated in the choice of language and Kannada poets did not use Sanskrit to write, though it was easily available to them. Considering the political and ideological reasons, they are reflected in sites of literary productions. (Nagaraj, 327) For instance, the main intention of the *Budhamandali* (the circle of the learned) is to create a new literary and cultural community in Karnataka.

Gradually, Kannada poets called themselves as *ubhayakavis* (one who can write both in shastra and kavya). The feeling of necessity of regional literature made them enjoys absolute freedom and challenges in their literary productions, which separate them or liberate from the clutches of Sanskrit hegemony. The poets like Pampa, Ranna and Ponna produced worldly and sagely epics and puranas that was not only a matter of writing differently or producing an indigenous culture, but their attempt brought them to new spheres of psychological domain of creativity and different world views of creation.

Thus, “Kannada formed with new vernacularity in new form and style. It is powerfully infused with Sanskrit idiom and grandiloquence; it is rich in universal imagery to express political and cultural discourse” (Pollock, 336). The origin of *Prasasthi* texts in the late 9th century is the result of this discourse. With vernacularization, there created a wider regional language literary culture, arising with the new political discourse. With *Prasasthi* and kavya, are co- conceived the production of a textualized sort or vernacular production. Anyhow, a new cultural practice and consciousness marked the late 9th century as a true inauguration- the moment when aesthetics of vernacular power began to produce a new power of vernacular aesthetics as a result of Kannada nationalism” (Pollock, 337- 38).

Vachana Movement

Vachana movement is referred to the literary form called Vachana (utterance or statement), which is a kind of “new communicative form...along with a new religious practice. It is often called also the Veerasaiva movement, in acknowledgement of the religious group that adopted the vachana as one of its principal genres. Along with this new literary form and religious practice, a whole range of new images and radical propositions came into being, marking this moment as one of profound discontinuity” (Nagaraj, 347) the translations in this literary genre are few in number. Vachana emerged out of oral practices of the religion. Vachanakaras (writers of vachana) wrote vachana by addressing their loving cults. This movement brought the state to a complex literary condition. Nagaraj, a famous

critic, commented on Vachana movement as

an impassioned revolt against the dominant organized religious institutions and practices of the period and their excessive dependence on the charity of the state and elite. This movement occurred in the last days of the weakened Chalukya dynasty, which ruled from the city of Kalyana...Basavanna, a senior official in charge of the treasury in the court of Bijjala, was a Saiva Barhaman by birth who revolted against Brahminism, threw away the sacred thread, and identified himself with a newly arisen reformist cult within Saivism whose nature remains as yet unclear to scholars. Basavanna was undoubtedly the chief organizer of the Vachana movement and because of his presence there, the city of Kalyana became its center. Other key leaders besides Basavanna were Allamaprabhu, Channa Basavanna, Akka Mahadevi and Sidharama. More than two hundred authors from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries- mostly from the lower castes, including more than forty women are known to have composed vachanas (347-48).

The attitude of equal religio-literariness among the Vachanakaras marked a great shift in the tradition of Kannada literary tradition. Until the beginning of Vachana movement Jaina poets wrote under the patronage of their Kings, who acted as the center of their writings. Basavanna and others take on Vachana form and wiped out the literary domination of Kings from the literary discourse. The great writer of vachana genre, Basavanna is completely obscured because people who came after Basavanna understood his bhakti but not his revolution. The characterization of Basavanna's life as a social leader does not emerge effectively in *Bhimakavi* or in any recent Virashaiva work. For such a picture, we have to go back to the vachanas of Basava. Later on, Vachana movement got institutionalized with the particular cult of Shiva and Vachanakaras produced Puranic texts and Shastra literature. With this kind of literature new forms of reasoning emerged to negotiate the domination of Sanskrit. Thus "Vachanakaras had translated the ideal of the moral economy of literature into reality by taking the very act of poetry away from the court and relocating it among religious intellectuals who were not absorbed in to established institutions" (Nagaraj, 356).

The vachana literature usually recognized as part of a movement called the vachana or Virashaiva or Lingayat movement of the 12th century. These literary works has come to be treated, in the 20th century, as the most important body of 'Literature' produced in Kannada. Vachanas carried contemporary popularity for many reasons; the most important one is that they have come to be regarded as one of the earliest indigenous expressions of a 'subaltern' revolt against 'the caste system.' The contemporary consensus that the vachanas articulate anti-caste thinking is evident in the following two excerpts typical of modern Lingayat scholarship: D.R. Nagaraj claims that "anti-caste philosophy was the fundamental stance of the vachana movement" (183). According to Chidananda Murthy, one of the important epigraphists to do substantial historical work concerning the vachanas and the 'Virashaiva movement', "Kannadigas should be proud of the fact that historically eight centuries ago was carried out by the vachana-composers in Karnataka".

The pre-colonial writings, which comprises of kavyas and puranas, view the Lingayat tradition as anything but a reform movement against the caste system. It is important to note that the vachanas give a picture of the tradition that corresponds with the modern image of the tradition as an anti-caste movement. Thus there seems to be a quite strong compulsion to

uphold this modern image of the Lingayat tradition after the State government of Karnataka brought out a mammoth collection of all the available vachanas (i.e., over 20,000 vachanas) in 14 volumes in 1993, no one had access to all these vachanas.

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