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## **Editor's Note**

True research writing needs to take on the job of intellectually activating untrodden tangents. Singularities aspires to be a journal which not just records the researches through publishing, but one which also initiates dialogues and urges involvement. 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. Space that permeates our existence, that influences the very way in which one experience, understand, navigate and recreate the world was selected as the theme for the annual conference of Singularities in 2017. The existence of space is irrevocably intertwined with culture, communication, technology, geography, history, politics, economics, and the lived experience. Understanding the spatial relationships, the tensions and dynamics that inform them, enables us to form insights into the process that configure the spaces we move through, inherit and inhabit. Spatial studies, also designated by terms as geocriticism, geopoetics or spatial humanities, is a growing body of critical scholarship, that attempts to discern the metaphysics of a culture from its own material. It frames an alternative method to the historical, biographical and narratological, to the perception of a culture. The papers that are presented in the Singularities Conference on Space, compiled in the special conference volume, Issue 2, not only examined the cultural attributes of a measurable space, but critiqued the imaginary, otherworldly, mythical, fantastic, cyberspace, and even the hybrid zones where fiction meets reality.

We are happy to present Singularities Space Conference Issue which offers stimulating read in terms of the experience of Space.

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



# Contents

1. **K. S. Saradhambal** 7-13  
Space and Formation of Identity :  
A Study of V. S. Naipaul's Trilogy on India
2. **Amina. N. M.** 14-18  
Mindscape – Moving and Still : A Study through  
Joy Mathew's Shutter and Abbas Kiarostami's  
Taste of Cherry
3. **Aneeta Sebastian** 19-22  
The Space of Stereotyped Hollywood :  
Red Indian and The Revenant
4. **Indu B. Kurup** 23-34  
City of Dreams/Extremes: Strategic Exoticism  
and (Re)presentation of Bombay in Altaf Tyrewala's  
No God in Sight and Jeet Thayil's Narcopolis
5. **Lakshmipriya. P.** 35-38  
M.T. Vasudevan Nair's Mist : A Poetry on Waiting
6. **Reeja** 39-44  
From Ocean to Land : A Metaphorical  
Transformation of Ariel's World in the Disney Movie  
The Little Mermaid
7. **Sarada. P. V.** 45-48  
A Perspective on Space - Living and Narrative in Amitav Ghosh's  
The Calcutta Chromosome
8. **Niyi Adebajo (Ph.D)** 49-58  
Between Love and Piety: The Man More Hated  
than Hating in Adichie's Purple Hibiscus
9. **Fathima Sullami. T. A.** 59-63  
Dilemmatic Voice from the Third Space:  
Hybridity and Diasporic Consciousness in  
M.G Vassanji's No New Land
10. **Amna Athimannil** 64-67  
Spatiality of Silence and  
Incarceration in The Metamorphosis

11. **Farsanah Moosa Kappil** 68-74  
In Search of Occidental Space in  
Hollywood Films to Overcome Xenophobia
12. **C. Joel Gnanadoss Timothy** 75-80  
From Village to City: Mapping Dalit Assertion
13. **N. Rema** 81-84  
Reflection of Cultural Memory with the Portrayal  
of Nadine Gordimer's *The Conservationist*
14. **M. Sarmila** 85-88  
Real and Imagined Spaces: The Study on the Presentation of  
Culture and History in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*
15. **Olayemi Oluwakemi Titilola** 89-100  
“Like” - An Appropriate Substitute for  
Prepositions in Nigerian English Usage?

## Space and Formation of Identity: A Study of V. S. Naipaul's Trilogy on India

### Abstract

*The mass dislocation of people in the post-modern scenario is governed by an urge to relocate, to reconstitute and to examine one's social space. This migration and migration of early period of imperialism created a construct of new spatial order. Imperialistic white supremacy over other races by brutal atrocities and ruthless exploitation produced migrant colonial subjects. The phenomena of colonial production of new world that gave birth to displaced identities. Foucault on his 'of other spaces' defines about the emergence of contestation of the space as heterotopias. Heterotopias mean mixing of several incompatible spaces in a real place. This space signifies modern social space. It was the result of coming together of own and the other. It is the manifestation of reality.*

*V.S. Naipaul born to parents of Indian origin in Trinidad with the living of his formative life in England knew nothing of his parent's family in India. To get anywhere in writing he felt that he first have to define himself clearly. Naipaul's engagement with India falls within this framework. Hence in respect of Naipaul's trilogy on India was of knowing India against cultural barrier between him and ancestral homeland was negotiated in terms of migrant's encounter with colonially produced 'heterotopic' reality of post-colonial India.*

*Naipaul's first reaction on India was too large a distance to be bridged because of his living in Trinidad and England. It took him 27 years and three books on India to arrive at an understanding of India. The writer's vision of India living abroad is shaped by lived in experience and the experience one has inherited. Naipaul's personal and inherited circumstance which went into his making as a writer has much scope for taking up this study. The childhood experience of Indian life in Trinidad, the incomplete spatial experience becomes complete by his contact with the place of his ancestors, the India. The exploration of the place with people, landscapes, culture, events, situations find meaning for his space that he inherited. The present study attempts to analyse the formation of the writer's identity by geographical inquiry into the reality of India with imaginary and spatial historical experience.*

**Keywords :** Space, place, heterotopic, identity.

Movement of all types has intensified in this modern world. Migration and migrants change space and create places that reflect where people come from, how they have migrated and what their relation to the host society. Places are landmarks of migration routes. Space became the factor in analysing migration thus creating specific relational spaces.

Foucault's primary definition of social space at once, point out the ambiguous relationship that the migrants share with their spaces of location. This ambiguity as the hallmark of modern spaces prevails in-between a sense of identity, rootedness, or belonging on the one hand, and its contradictory suggestions of dislocation, alienation and non-belonging on the other. Thus, these spaces forge ones identity in an ever-present migrant condition of displacement without origin. Naipaul's Indian trilogy with the problematic of

knowing India, overriding the cultural barriers that exist between Naipaul and his ancestral homeland, must be negotiated in terms of the migrant traveller's encounter with the colonially produced “heterotopic” reality of post-independent India in the formation of identity.

Naipaul's achieving a sense of belonging became difficult because of his partial relation to multiple nations. His interest in his relationships with places becomes inevitable to the idea of space and place. Many of his works produced by his imagining and writing about places were geographically far away from him. This distance also caused Naipaul problem because he lacked his own settled place and has no society to write about. He constantly undertook journey to look for material. Thus, Naipaul's lack of his own society brings forth the spatial life of a traveller. His characters also revealed spatial sensibilities.

Naipaul's journey to India made him sketch the trilogy on India, *Area of Darkness* (AOD), *India: A Wounded Civilization* (IWC) and *India: A Million Mutinies Now* (IMMN). His journey to India was both familiar and strange and was far more personal and emotional because it was the land of his ancestors. The present study is an attempt to analyse the spatial understanding of India by the writer and his formation of identity in his trilogy on India. Trilogy on India signified how Naipaul negotiated with his homeland in terms of migrant's encounter with heterotopic spatial reality of India.

V.S. Naipaul's *Area of Darkness* was the first book on India written after his first visit to the nation. The author-traveller made a convincing attempt to negotiate with 'otherness' of India, the land of his forefathers. It was a culture shock because of his sudden exposure to the foreign reality of the place. In spite of the ambivalent attitude of the narrator and the narrative showed a gradual development of a greater willingness to negotiate with the complex spatial reality of India.

Naipaul confronted with two realities or maps of India, one the visible India of the physical and the imaginary India of migrant memory that he carried with him. His physical encounter provided him with the narrative occasion to textualize his 'heterotopic' experience of Indian subcontinent which challenged his metropolitan standards of judgement. Visible spatiality of India frustrated him and provoked anger in him, there was always a hidden tension between the text and the writer in the novel. The psychological presence of the India of ancestral memory was always present:

And in India I was to see that so many of the things which the newer and now perhaps truer side of my nature kicked against ... the smugness, as it seemed to me, the imperviousness to criticism, the refusal to see, the double-talk and double-think ... had answer in that side of myself which I had thought buried and which India revived as a faint memory. I understood better than I admitted. (AOD 35-36)

Spatial status could be found more on Naipaul's own journey into the 'self'. Through the lens of India the author examined his own self. The heterotopic construction of India between past and the present, the familiar and the unfamiliar the real and the imaginary provided ample opportunity for the post- modern spatial analysis. The narrator's first encounter with the physical place was after his sea- voyage with the customs at Bombay in retrieving his liquor bottles revealed his inaccessibility of India. The deferred nature of the migrant, the initial shock had led him to chain of psychic process which revealed both past

and the present in the narrator's life. India was a narrator's lost ancestral home land as well as an excluded space of cultural identification in the writer's consciousness. It was reconfigured into a complex spatiality:

And even now, though time has widened, though space has contracted and I have travelled lucidly over that area which was to me the area of darkness, something of darkness remains, in those attitudes, those ways of thinking and seeing, which are no longer mine. (AOD 30)

But the writer here tried to reclaim the darkness through the process of painful recognition of the places, culture and people. During the period of his life in Trinidad, India was a site of cultural resources like religion, rituals, food and social customs which was the private sphere of East Indian community. But the acknowledgment of the place of the present is not easy for Naipaul as the intervening years since the days of his childhood and adolescence had brought with them accounts of further displacement from Trinidad to England. These displacements with wider exposure to the multiracial reality of Trinidad and experience of cultural alienation at London resulted in dislocation. He also preferred for the difference of an outsider to the anonymity of an insider: "I had been made by Trinidad and England; recognition of my difference was necessary to me" (AOD 43)

The awareness of this difference occurred to the narrator when he found himself among the crowd in Church Gate station. At Bombay, he felt that he might sink without trace among the Indian crowd. India carried a threatening impression of heterotopic collectivism but without any sort of socio-cultural anchorage. The migrant identity of the narrator had to be protected against the heterotopic anonymity of the crowd. At the same time the desire for a home did not desire for lost homeland but a longing for a new space that accommodate the emigrant identity. His stay at London did not satisfy his need for feeling at home: "I came to London. It had become the centre of my world and I had worked hard to come to it. And I was lost. London was not the centre of my world. I had been misled; but there was nowhere else to go" (AOD 42).

This became the narrator's unconscious motivation for his visit to the land of his ancestors. His repressed urge for a new space of belonging goaded him to view the place in terms of heterotopic alienation. Throughout the novel the narrator frequently came up with sudden bouts of anger, exhaustion and shame with his own incomprehensible material realities of the place. This is apparent during his stay in Delhi where he "could only escape from one darkened room to another, separate from the reality of outdoor" (AOD 93).

Naipaul's visit to Kashmir turned out to be of greater realization and of integration with the landscape and its people: I wished I was of their spirit. I wished that something of their joy awaited me at the end. Yet a special joy had been with me throughout the pilgrimage and during all my time in Kashmir. It was the joy of being among mountains; . . . I felt linked to them; . . . India, the Himalayas: they went together (AOD 167). The place Kashmir reawakened the memory of the bright coloured religious pictures of his grandmother's house at Trinidad. The mountains served as a hidden link to his childhood memory. The imaginary centre of his childhood and the physical centre of the present enabled Naipaul to claim the spatial aspect of India which he thought to be unattainable.

The visit to his ancestral house in the village of the Dubes turned out to be a moment of despair and pent-up regret over the loss: "India had not worked its magic on me. It remained

the land my childhood, an area of darkness;... In a year I had not learned acceptance, I had learned my separateness from India, was content to be a colonial, without a past, without ancestors” (AOD 252). The real episode of migrant narrator's homecoming in which the past collapsed into the present, the imaginary penetrated in to the physical. In his grandfather's house when his family photographs were shown to him he felt, “as old to me and as forgotten as the images; and it was again disturbing to my sense of place and time to handle them” (AOD 256). Naipaul's this encounter with his forgotten past erased the outsider and insider division and ended in “fertility, and impatience, a gracious act of cruelty, self-reproach and flight” (AOD 263). He was not able to respond to the darkness of India, the heterotopic signifier of the unfamiliarity of his identity. On his way back to London he wrote about his visit to India “it was a journey that ought not to have been made; it had broken my life in two” (AOD 265). This implied the beginning of his identity crisis.

With the oblong cloth that was presented to Naipaul in India he felt: “I flattened and studied it for the clues which I knew existed, which I desired above everything else to find, but which I knew I never would” (AOD 266). The word 'clues' rendered an open ended narrative with unresolved tensions and future possibility of revisiting to his ancestral homeland in search of the clues that will enable him to have a fuller comprehension of his self-identity. Area of Darkness provided him a profound heterotopic experience of self-questioning. There was a gradual shift in Naipaul's ways of looking and feeling from physical reality to intellectual engagement with cultural space of the country. Though he repeatedly failed to accept India he could not ignore it. The cultural encounter correlated between space and self-identity and a new vision of space and cultural geography brought out a new identity on the part of the writer.

Naipaul's second novel on India, *India: A Wounded Civilization*, lead him gradually to a new self-awareness and enabled him to reconstruct the cultural space of the nation in terms of his perspective of belonging and identity. Between the writing of this novel and the earlier one Naipaul made visits to African countries and India and began to depict different form of expression among diversity of spaces that were within the real places. With his intellectual engagement he distanced himself from social space. In the maturing aspect of his engagement with the space and cultural geography of the post-colonial world, Naipaul gradually learnt to engage with the past and matured into personality with a firm faith in his fractured identity and displaced origin.

The mode of spatial query in his treatment of heterotopic and nationalist space of India culminated in his second novel on India. By the process of remaking of society, Naipaul has made his personal search for a new space of belonging and identity. India tutored the arrogant visitor to transform the old India as a heterotopic countersite to his self-identity into a vision of new India as an emerging social space for discourse.

*India: A Wounded Civilization* therefore was loaded with modernizing dynamic that propelled everyone out of their native place of origin. Hence Naipaul took this novel to know about how far the post-colonial India “easily raided and plundered and learned so little from its disasters” (IWC 7-8). In spite of such a past the nation was capable of coping with the new trends of global modernity.

Naipaul's spatial study of the history of the nation and the imperial conquest revealed his own interpretative strategy. He evaluated India as a wounded civilization in terms of the damage that was caused to the nation by invasions. He explored the internal physical space of

the country with the national past, identity and culture. With his newly realized self-identity. He analysed the nationspace with cultural and political authority on one hand and people and subject on the other hand.

India of Area of Darkness provided him with heterotopic experience from which he wanted to escape but couldnot. Out of his pervious Indian experience he emerged now with the 'wounded' self which was but the crisis of his own identity. That is why he maintained Indian space as: "India is for me a difficult country. It isn't my home and cannot be my home; and yet I cannot reject it or be indifferent to it; I cannot travel only for the sights. I am at oncetoo close and too far" (IWC 8-9). The initial spatial shock of India had evolved into an intellectual comprehension later. The same Indian space which was personal choice between approval and disapproval had come be identified to explore that hidden resourcefulness of a displaced nation.

It has taken India, which I visited for the first time in 1962, turned out to be a very strange land . . . It has taken me much time to come to terms with the strangeness of India, to definewhat separates me from the country; and to understand how far the 'Indian' attitudesof someone like myself, a member of a small and remote community in the NewWorld, have diverged from the attitudes of people to whom India is still whole (IWC 9).

The personal space of India has now become a collective space. The heterotopic India here took into the textual production of the 'lived social space' the discussion of emergency of 1975 had to be looked in the context of his spatial engagement with the existing democratic framework of India. In this novel Naipaul's narrative engagement with India as a heterotopic 'other' was rather a new Indianness sympathetically shared between him and post-independent India.

The democratic system in India, according to Naipaul functioned as "borrowed or inherited ones" (IWC 69).If this became disabled the only option was to take refuge in its Gandhian rhetoric for democracy or people's government. But according to Naipaul the post independent Gandhianism missed the much needed reference to the social materiality of contemporary India. But at the same time Naipaul opined about the blindness of Indian government to the disruption of civilization by the foreign invasions:

India, without its own living traditions, has lost the ability to incorporate and adapt;what it borrows it seeks to swallow whole. For all its appearance of cultural continuity, for all the liveliness of its arts of dance, music, and cinema, India isincomplete: a whole creative side has died. It is the price India has had to pay for its British period. (IWC 126)

Throughout the novel Naipaul questioned the possibility of preserving of this cultural continuity. With the new encounter of "unknown India on the move" (IWC 53) Naipaul arrived at the alternative version of modernity. This was more relevant to the Lefebvre's 'representational spaces'. Naipaul's perception of the spatial difference of this new India from the familiar India was evident from his assessment of the journalist he met and talked to in Bombay: "And the journalist was insecure. As an Indian he was not yet secureenough to think of Indian identity as something dynamic, something that couldincorporate the millions on the move, the corrupters of the cities" (IWC 71).

With all these encounters India forced him to acknowledge its spatiality that Naipaul must

come to terms with in order to develop a sense of new belonging and identity to his ancestral homeland. This perception of a new India will be reinforced in *India: A Million Mutinies Now* (IMMN). With this third novel on India, Naipaul configured the faucaultian's contest between 'old' and 'new' and Soja's 'Third' spatial specific to his textual imagining of a restructured cultural geography of India." The old equilibrium had gone,... India was learning new ways of seeing and feeling" (IMMN 48). But to recognize the third space, focus must be made on Naipaul's spatialization of culture, history and identity in a nationality.

In *India: A Million Mutinies Now*, Naipaul adopted an alternative mode of viewing India of new reality with the spaces of modernity. This spatiality of contemporary India had all the problematic issues of modern India like caste, gender religion, politics on the foreground to the process of nation building, hence with the discourse of national modernity evolved a common programme of spatializing the national culture and identity in the post-colonial context.

The novel has ample number of interviews of people belonging to diverse phases of society by Naipaul. This strategy was adopted in this latest novel on India: "I thought it was better to let India be defined by the experience of the people, rather than writing one's personal reaction to one's feeling about being an Indian and going back" (Jussawalla 111). This huge change of temperament in his personality also paved way for the change in the formation of his identity. These dialogues produced a unique discourse of national moderate view of identity politics. Spatial engagement with the nation he achieved a clear view of the spatial contestation which formed the beginning of self – awareness. The identity formation of Naipaul with the nation revealed that:

What looked sudden had been long prepared. The increased wealth showed; the new confidence of people once poor showed. One aspect of that confidence was the freeing of new particularities, new identities, which were as unsettling to Indians as the identities of caste and clan and religion had been to me in 1962, when I had gone to India only as an 'Indian' (IMMN 9).

Here Naipaul emerged as a new Indian in a larger sense of shared identity. Naipaul in course of time acquired a greater intimacy with the Indian spatiality. During the final period of stay, India opened up an imaginary route to his ancestral homeland: "In 27 years I had succeeded in making a kind of return journey, shedding my Indian nerves abolishing the darkness that separated me from my ancestral past" (IMMN 516). Hence *India: A Million Mutinies Now* was portrayed more of the postcolonial discovery of new spatiality of his home space and the formation of his identity through spatial remapping in Indian trilogy by which Naipaul explored a new space, a new reality and new identity.

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## Mindscape – Moving and Still : A Study through Joy Mathew's *Shutter* and Abbas Kiarostami's *Taste of Cherry*

*"Dreams are shattered, hopes are battered,*

*Yet with new status one is flattered!*

*The irony of it-detention, and all:*

*Be so small, and stand so tall."*(9-12 ) *Homeward Bound*, Moazzam Begg.

The verses carved in the tea cups by Guantanamo prisoners and circulated within themselves and the poems written in prison walls show the intensity of the mindscape inside the restricted walls of oppression and captivity. In Begg's poem the somersault of human mind from despondency to optimism and confidence is sketched picturesquely. The literary works during the holocaust still attracts attention. The blogs of Malala Yousafzai, talked about the Taliban occupation and education of girls. When the emotions are compressed forcefully it explodes more violently. It is the activity of the mindscape that tries to escape from this corporeal restriction of space.

The space constriction never restricts the human mind from its passion of creativity and its need for existence. Existence for human being is not merely the biological process of living. Each individual wants to stamp his unique survival in the world. She tries to carve out a distinct space for herself. The space formulated by individual is primarily formed in the mindscape. According to Oxford dictionary mindscape is defined as "The range of a person's thoughts and imagination, mental landscape or inner vision". The restrictions and obstructions in the physical world are negligible to the vast capability of the mindscape. This paper discusses the possibility of mindscape to alter the material space and thus modify the flow of human life. The study is based on two movies. The concerned movies are selected beyond national boundaries to derive a universal conclusion. Abbas Kiarostami's *The Taste of Cherry* is Iranian and Joy Mathew's *Shutter* is a Malayalam movie respectively. Humans are the only living things that are supposed to think. And this places them superior to all other forms of life. The human mind is mainly divided into three parts namely, conscious, sub conscious and unconscious. The conscious mind is the ever alert and the portion that functions in the present, while sub conscious is the accessible form of information that functions along with the conscious mind. But unconscious mind is the internal memories but not currently accessible memories. Even though the unconscious has a role in forming the character and attitudes of a person that is not visible even for him or to others. This ambiguous nature of human being makes it unreliable even for the person herself. It is true that the experiences of childhood, the circumstances in which one grow up, struggles and the way they make a proper "living" ( in the complete sense of the word) influence the personality of each individual. This means the character, tone and flavor of the external space influence the inner spaces. As Noam Chomsky and Loretto Toad says about the language acquisition of a baby it is the innate capacity of humans to mould oneself according to the space they

inhabit. The duration of this inhabiting can vary from a few seconds to a lifetime. And the power of each space to influence and not to influence also widely differs. The capacity of the space to influence is the first area from which I would like to start my discussion.

### **Influence**

In the movie *The Taste of Cherry*, Kiarostami presents a man who drives around and asks if anyone could bury him after his suicide. The first man he meets didn't even get included to the space inside the vehicle. The soldier, Pasteur and Mr. Bagheri inhabit the space along with the driver. Experience that the life bestows on each person in the world varies widely. The soldier is not meant to be one and is afraid of everything. While the Pasteur declines the request because he believes in the final return of man to god and opines, "god entrust man's body to him, man must not torment his body". But Mr. Bagheri accepts it because of his plight. Here the driver couldn't influence any person even though they shared a common space. The experiences and backgrounds of each person define the architecture of their mindscape. It is the influences of these mindscapes that defines and fabricates even the political economic and social decisions of each age. Mr. Bagheri could easily influence Badi and his view points about life try to pull him back to enjoy the taste of "cherry" life. In *Shutter* the prostitute influenced the man by her life experience. It is the way her unconscious formed her conscious and sub conscious parts of mind that led her to renew the stubborn mind of a totally unknown man. The influence of these inner spaces is beyond the definitions of all modes of mundane spaces. The space is a medium, characters in both movies even though very proximal to each other inhabit in their own continents. Whenever the inner spaces are ready to accept the other, i.e., whenever the mindscape held them close, then they can openly converse and understand each other. The capacity of humans to think, respond and react better than other life forms cannot be claimed to make him superior. This superiority is acceptable only when they try to understand the fellow beings and extend their helping selves to others. This opening up is absent in Badi's case except with the old man. In both movies it is the authority of Bagheri and the prostitute that fulfill the proximity of their existence and hence the spaces they inhabit influence their decisions.

### **Mindversations**

As it is discussed under influence, the conversations between the characters in both movies are the exchange of their fragment of mind. This internal exchange is build upon and flourished under the backdrop of material and abstract space they occupy. According to Michel Metzeltin the point of view of each person about another and vice versa are called "interior self-representation, refracted self representation, exterior self-presentation, hetero presentation according to the presenter, hetero presentation according to the one to whom it is presented." This is similar to the principal of communication which says when one person communicate with another there are at least six peoples involved-"1) who you think you are; 2) who you think the other person is; 3) who you think the other person thinks you are; 4) who the other person thinks /she is; 5) who the other person thinks you are; and 6) who the other person thinks you think s/he is." According to the above mentioned theory the conversations concerned involves at least "six peoples". These peoples are inside an arena. Here comes the importance of space. A man himself is unaware of his other self. The lady in *Shutter* says about her past as a girl, early married bride, but she behaves as a stranger to her old self. The space in both movies acts as a stage for the multiple selves of the same individual to understand, explore and reveal about them.

The nature of the space concerned is yet another point to be discussed. As it is previously said, the space acts as a stage which is filled with “sound and fury”, the space involved in the movies is literally similar to a stage which is isolated from the outer world and involves only the person or more specifically only their mindscapes. Here one space is moving, the people gets into the vehicle, travels and moves away from the driver's alluring offer of ,material benefit. This rapid movement is better portrayed when the soldier runs away from Mr.Badi. But the magic of the space is accomplished when the driver goes back to Mr.Bagheri. The vehicle was a space where they both get involved, and it is notable that the driver was more of a listener while in other instances, he was the chief speaker. The mobile nature of the space influenced the mindscape of the driver, who was earlier static to death wish and was moved out to a decision to a thirst to live. He is the one who spends more time in the vehicle and his is the mind that is more moved from one point to another. In *Shutter* the space is still. The man holds himself stubbornly from the changes around the world. But when the mindscape expands and accepts the other person's opinions the shutter also opens. The stubborn mind is always closed. It can be opened only when it gets ready to accept the existence of an ultimate space which encompasses entire humanity. The space and mind has a direct relation.

The acceptance of the space is yet another feature. The willful involvement of humans results in maximum outcome. Psychologists talk about this willful acceptance as the complete submission towards his/her attempt to accomplish something. This basic psychology is used in cases related to crimes. When a person chose to be in a space that is his willful acceptance, and if one is forced into it, he won't fit into those space and always remains to be an alien. Here the individual will internally place her far away from the other components of the space. This inability to fit into the space plays significant role in the failure of the “influence factor”. There is also an “ignorance” factor. The person might be unaware and get involved. In such cases her reaction towards the influence and the ability to get involved into the space cannot be determined. This willful involvement and enforcing into the space depend on the cause for which they are involved to the space. In *Taste of Cherry*, all the travelers are unaware or rather confused of the reason they are involved in the space. This ambiguity and the “force” element make the soldier completely away from the influence. This double action made him a complete alien to the space. The Pasteur was just ignorant about the cause, but his spiritual background made him to sympathize with the driver. During the beginning Mr.Bagheri might also be ignorant about the cause. His mental proximity towards the driver as yet another version of his past ends up to an acceptance to the space and he is the one who leads the driver. Here the cause and acceptance of the space created a proximity which neither nationality nor money could bestow. In *Shutter* both of them are included to the space with complete submission. They are neither ignorant nor forced into it. While the man was in a way forced by his friends the prostitute attends the space for her living. This change in attitude is perfectly visible in their reaction when they are trapped inside the room. Her acceptance made her to speak more openly than him. His slow acceptance of the space made his mindscape a link with hers. The acceptances of the driver and the man expand beyond the space they are involved and make them to dream about a better living. This realization underlines the capacity of mindscape in forming and altering material spaces.

### **Grave as a space**

The restricted spaces in both movies consist of two participants. But the space that Badi

wishes to attain and finally tries to escape is the space in the grave. The uncertainty of death and the mystery about what happens after death makes the grave more graver. As hamlet junior says,”

“but that the dread of something after death,  
The undiscover'd country from whose bourn  
No traveller returns, puzzles the will  
And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
Than fly to others that we know not of?”.(3.1.79-83)

No one has ever returned from death to talk about how it feels to be dead. It is the loneliness of grave that the driver wishes and fears. There are no external or internal factors to influence the “life” in grave. And there is no one to talk about the nature of it. The life situations, education or experiences could not save man from the silence and ambiguity of grave. The movie “Buried” talks about a man alive inside the grave. The influence of external and internal factors and all other features are applicable there. Because the man inside the coffin was still a human being with a dilating heart and throbbing pulse and more importantly a well functional mind. Thus the absence of a mindscape is again regarded as the defining head of all kind of spaces. As no one can authentically describe about the nature of a grave, the absence or may be presence of mind cannot be associated with the grave. This uncertainty associated with the kingdom of death and grave makes us to keep grave as a unique space. All so called definitions and theories about material and immaterial space fails here. The grave is a space which is not applicable to any of the above discussed ideas of space.

### **The role of space**

The function of mindscape is neither dependant on gender nor age. Such material scales put forward by humans cannot touch the “internal super computer” called mind. Hence the mind can alter and format decisions, attitudes toward life irrespective of caste, creed, nationality, gender and age. The space cannot influence a mind which stubbornly moves away and hence it doesn't involve with the elements in the physical space. The approval and as previously said the full acceptance of mindscape is necessary for the involvement and attachment with the physical space. It is a process similar to osmosis, if the space acts like a semi permeable membrane, more influential attitude flows through this membrane and influence the submissive personality. If the space is non-permeable then this exchange never happens. It is the decision of the mindscape to decide whether to define, elaborate and present her attitude and guide the person involved. Mainly the attitude towards life and self realization is achieved through this cultural and mental flow. Mr.Bagheri's attitude about life is the triumph of human mind over the uncertainties and immaturities of mind. He says, “Life is like a train that keeps on moving forward and then reaches the end of the line, the terminus. And death waits at the terminus.”

In Shutter the lady talk about the same uncertainty of human life. Her attitude towards life and her experience and advice about a women's life is revealed. As the space is restricted and mindscape wide enough to accept the grief, advice and happiness of the other person, attitudes are also perfectly conveyed. Movies are regarded as a medium for mass communication, the influence of these attitudes leaves the space from the movie screen and overflows to the mindscapes of the audience as well. Thus movies accomplish its duty of being informative, entertaining, didactic and one which bestows them a renewal and revival of life.

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## The Space of Stereotyped Hollywood : Red Indian and *The Revenant*

### Abstract

*The Hollywood since its inception had been a space of Whites to delineate their imperium, intelligence, racism, power and ascendance over the 'colored'. The 'colored' in the context of Hollywood holds the large group of minorities including the migrants and natives. America and Hollywood, being the centers of racial institutional powers, even the movie productions which they claim to be anti-racist or pro-ethnic falls for the same conventions out and out. The stereotyping of minorities had been a normalized system in Hollywood. These minorities were always portrayed as characters that aids for the glorification of the 'Whitehood'. They differ from each other only in the terms of names, skin, culture and identities, except their destinies. Hollywood always had a fascination for the Native Americans. Right from Jay Silverhills in 1940s to Alex Meraz in the present, we could see many Native Americans in Hollywood productions but were they given the right space in these movies? Or were they portrayed as the typical stereotyped Indian sidekicks? This paper is an attempt to analyse the space of Red Indian minorities in Hollywood with a focus on the blockbuster 'The Revenant' (2016). This movie was critically acclaimed, even by the Red Indian communities for its depiction of the plight of Red Indians in 1800s. But I argue that subversively this movie reaffirm the racial status quo and White domination by echoing the changing contemporary idea of racism. Rather than serving a testimony of racial progress or a decline in the significance of race Hollywood had just continued the same pattern of stereotyping in this movie too.*

**Keywords:** Hollywood, Red Indian minorities, Whiteness, Media representation, Cultural hegemony.

The American film industry, often referred to as Hollywood, is the big name that dominates the world cinema for more than a century. It is the industry leader in the form of artistic expression that came to dominate the twentieth century and continues as a popular art form at the beginning of the twenty-first century. While the Lumiere Brothers are generally credited with the birth of modern cinema, it is indisputably American cinema that quickly became the dominant force in the industry (5). The dominance of Hollywood can not only be considered as the success of a major movie business factory but it accounts a lot more to the cultural imperium of the Whites who rule it.

Laura Santhanam and Megan Crigger in the blog *The Rundown* say that:

“Researchers at the University of Southern California studied the 700 top-grossing films from 2007 to 2014, excluding 2011, and analyzed the race and ethnicity of more than 30,000 characters to reveal diversity in film. The findings showed that for nearly a decade, filmmakers have made virtually no progress in portraying more characters from non-White racial and ethnic identities. Of the top 100 films of 2014, nearly three-quarters of all

characters were White, the study showed. Only 17 of the top movies that year featured non-White lead or co-lead actors. (8)

According to Laurean Leader-Chivee : “Film studio (Hollywood) heads are 94 percent White and 98 percent male. Film studio senior management is 92 percent White and 83 percent male. Television network and studio heads are 96 percent White and 71 percent male. Television senior management is 93 percent White and 73 percent male” (3). Hollywood from the very beginning itself had been a space of (for) Whites. He directs the movies, he finances it, he writes the screen play, he chooses the cast, and he act in it. Even the Hollywood movies have a wide variety of viewers (including the ethnic communities) thus the Whites have default superiority both in on-screen and off-screen.

The Hollywood had always portrayed the White hero as White savior. The narrative trope of the White savior is how the mass communications medium of cinema represents the sociology of race and ethnic relations, by presenting abstract concepts — such as morality — as innate characteristics (racial and cultural) of White people, rather than as characteristics innate to people of color (6).The coloured had always been used as instruments for the glorification of White heroes or heroines. The Hollywood coloured or non-Whites include the Black, Native American, Hispanic, Italian, Irish, Jewish, Slavic, Chinese, German, and Asian but Hollywood had never tried to give any positive racial identity to these characters they were either villains or treacherous women or loyal slaves who sacrifice their lives for their master or women who flirt with the White hero but finally loses him to another White woman or he may be mere sidekicks.

The Red Indian minorities are one of the major ethnic groups who found space in the Hollywood movies. Ward Churchill comments that “The cinematic depiction of Indigenous people in America is objectively racist at all levels. This observation encompasses not only the more than two thousand Hollywood movies featuring or touching upon such subject matters over the years but even the great number of titles made for the television” (4). Their roles had been much exploited by the Hollywood as they believe that the 'exoticism' of American Indians- their adorned clothing and native rituals- which belonged to a race and culture distinctly different from the White America could fascinate the audience (1).The Native Americans had a history of their own traced back to more than 12,000 years ago. They spoke hundreds of different languages and lived in different ways. The Native American Literature comprises the whole body of songs, stories and chants handed over by generations through the aid of oral tradition. Later they found their place in the history through the translations works of the Whites. Since the Whites started to live in the land of the Natives and started to write about them in their literary works we find them stereotyped as violent, uncivilized villain, juxtaposed next to the archetypal hero: the virtuous, White Anglo-Saxon settler. The Hollywood movies also do the same thing.

Throughout history, Native Americans have remained one of America's most marginalized minorities. As with any minority population, the American Indian population's challenges, struggles and progressive strides are reflected in popular culture. Hollywood and the American film industry have long represented Red Indians unfavorably. In much the same manner that American colonists forced them off their native land, filmmakers have often relegated Native American characters to enact roles wherein they have been typecast as minor characters displaying stereotypical, historically inaccurate behavior. That is not to say that American Indians have not been present in film. On the contrary, they existed as staple

characters for a large portion of the twentieth century, especially in the popular Western genre. This marginalizing of the population has been manifested in the creation of harmful and one-dimensional stereotypes.

The recent Hollywood movie *The Revenant* (2016) starring Leonardo DiCaprio as Glass, and co-stars Tom Hardy, Domhnall Gleeson and Will Poulter proves the same. The movie was based in part on Michael Punke's novel *The Revenant: A Novel of Revenge* (2002), inspired by the real life experiences of frontiersman Hugh Glass in 1823, at South Dakota. The same story of Glass Hugh was portrayed in fiction and film earlier, *Lord Grizzly* (1954) by Frederick Manfred and *Man in the Wilderness* (1971) respectively. The White hero has constantly been the center of American commercial movies which have been swarming into every corner of the world. Individual heroism as the logo of commercial movies has become the quintessence and soul of Hollywood movies. *The Revenant* does the both, it focus on the survival story of a White man and the extraordinary power of the human spirit. This paper attempts to depict the default Hollywood idea of stereotyping of the Red Indians in the movie *The Revenant* which claim to have pro-ethnic sensibilities.

What makes *The Revenant* so different from its other versions of the story is that it could create a misunderstanding among the audience that it truly represents history and cultural identity of the Native Americans. It is to be noted that in the movie even though we have Indigenous characters — in particular, Arikara and Pawnee characters —who play significant supporting roles, they are stereotypical in their nature. Native American women and men fulfilled different stereotypes in these films. It is important to keep in mind that most of these images have been constructed by Whites. Hollywood and the American film industry have long represented Indians unfavorably. In much the same manner that American colonists forced Indians off their native land, filmmakers have often relegated Native American characters to roles wherein they have been typecast as minor characters displaying stereotypical, historically inaccurate behavior.

The film co-stars Native American actor Forrest Goodluck as Glass's son, Hawk, and First Nations actor Duane Howard as Elk Dog, among the other Native characters who assist or antagonize DiCaprio's White protagonist but both of these characters does not survive for long, both of them were brutally killed by the Whites in the movie. It is very clear in the case of the movie *The Revenant* that the Hollywood film makers make use of their ethnicity to trade their movies in a way that they are emotionally appealing to audience.

The depiction of Native American women in the Hollywood movies are very fixed one. It is very evident in this movie too. There is no reference to Glass's family in any of the novels, but in the movie we have Glass' recollection of memories of his Pawnee wife. Why did Hollywood want a White hero to have a Red Indian wife even she have nothing to do more than to remain in memory of the hero (because she was killed by U.S Army) and chant something when the hero feels down? “The cinematic stereotype of the American Indian women is influenced by three different images: Women as Mother Earth, women as the dangerous queen, or women as an innocent princess” (7). Of course, these images bear no connection to real Indian women. In these movies she either acts as a helper or a lover figure.

Why does the Hollywood want a half-Pawnee child for Glass? Angela Alesis in her book *Making the White Man's Indian: Native Americans and Hollywood Movies* states that the “Reviewers clung to similar conventions regarding Indian/ White mixed bloods or half

breeds. Often the movies half-breeds were either loyal or treacherous.” Hawk in the movie is deeply devoted to his White father and finally loses his life as he prevents Fitzgerald from killing his bed ridden father.

We find the character of Pawnee Indian Elk Dog, consuming the carcass of a bison in the movie. This clearly shows the prejudice of Hollywood in depicting the Indians as savages and uncultured who eats carcass of animals. Even the White hero asks for his share he had a justification for taking it, because he was badly injured and unable to find food for himself. The Pawnee Indian plays the role of the sympathetic native who is loyal to his White master. Elk Dog is stereotyped by the Hollywood as a healer, when his mission was accomplished he is brutally erased from the screen. Native American males are often portrayed as wise men with magical powers in film and television shows. Usually medicine men of some sort, these characters have little function other than to guide white characters in the right direction. The White hero is unsympathetic when he sees that the Indian has been hanged by the French fur trappers. He just moves on with his mission to avenge his loss. Umberto Eco in one of his essay says about how the Native Americans have been diminished by Hollywood's images and narratives. Instead of being represented as daring, strategic and wise –all qualities, among others, authenticated by the historical record they have been confined on screen to idiocies.

*The Revenant* when it was released on January 2016, it was critically acclaimed for the depiction of Native Americans. All Red Nation Films were too proud to congratulate Leonardo DiCaprio, Alejandro González Iñárritu, and the cast and crew of *The Revenant* for their Golden Globe awards. Even though Leonardo DiCaprio himself had dedicated his Golden Globe award for the best actor, to “the first nations people represented in this film, and all the indigenous communities around the world, when we have a closer look at the movie we can find that the Hollywood had done nothing new as it claims to be. They had actually depicted the attitude of the cultured Whites in this movie too. All of the Native American characters including the Indian Chief and his tribe, the pregnant Pawnee woman, Arikara Warrior, Arikara Elder are depicted as stereotypes. The Hollywood films directed by White men—are desperate to not rattle any cages; their depictions of racism are family friendly, never risking the boundaries of their PG-13 ratings. The image of the Hollywood Indian reflects neither contemporary nor historical Native American realities; instead, it is based in the views and desires of non-Native producers, screenwriters, directors, and actors. Closely connected to myths and images created about Native Americans and the Wild West, the stereotype has undergone significant changes from the beginning of cinema to the present day but they are still reluctant to erase from the screen.

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## City of Dreams/Extremes: *Strategic Exoticism* and (Re)presentation of Bombay in Altaf Tyrewala's *No God in Sight* and Jeet Thayil's *Narcopolis*

### Abstract

*Bombay as a multicultural space has been voraciously presented and (re)presented through both visual and literary mediums. This metropolitan city has often attracted a massive free-flow of migrants belonging to diverse (foreign/native) locales, cultures, traditions, linguistic spheres and religion. The city is equivocally referred to as a space that provides an opportunity to fulfill one's dreams. Yet, Bombay has its set of drawbacks as an urban space. Besides communal violence and terror attacks, increasing migrant population, pollution and the narcotic dens as well as the presence of the notorious underworld, loom as dark shadows over the glamorous city.*

*As spatial theory is turning to be more and more important from the cultural studies perspective; narratives focusing on the relation between migrant identity and the dwindling urban space and the exposition of hitherto vaguely known underbellies of the city have become the thrust area in contemporary Indian English fictions. Two such instances are Altaf Tyrewala's *No God in Sight* and Jeet Thayil's *Narcopolis*. *No God in Sight* is a kaleidoscopic vision of Bombay from divergent outlooks largely from Muslim migrants' perspective. *Narcopolis*, on the other hand unfurls the seductive tales from the point of view of those who dwell in the creepiest spaces of the city such as opium dens, dance bars, and the red streets. Both the novels try to open up a grotesque India, often referred to as "Dark India" to the opposing concept of "Shining India."<sup>2</sup>*

*Though literary works often act as a mirror that reflects reality, nevertheless novels that project the ugly underbelly of the cityscape has managed to carve out a comfortable niche in the literary market through "staging marginality," and reifies otherness via "strategic exoticism," the two critical concepts proposed by the postcolonial critic Graham Huggan. The research paper aims to interrogate the possibility of the creation of cultural capital through the dissemination of such representations as well as the (re)production of a cultural baggage of otherness "for the imagined benefit of a majority audience" (Huggan xii).*

**Keywords:** Dark India, inauthentic narrator, re-Orientalism, strategic exoticism, staged marginalities

Viability of Bombay as a national, cultural and artistic trope has attracted the attention of Indian English authors to a great extent; the availability of umpteen number of fictional and non-fictional narratives centred on this postcolonial city elucidates this. Bombay is the oft sought benign muse that lends literary inspiration to these writers. The spatial exploration of Bombay<sup>3</sup> (now Mumbai) has been embarked on in miscellaneous ways. Besides the urbanity, a multilevel enterprise on Bombay has been undertaken from the sociological, economical,

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<sup>2</sup>The concept is taken from *Re-Orientalism and Indian Writing in English* by Lisa Lau and Om Prakash Dwivedi, which was published in 2014.

<sup>3</sup>The choice of Bombay instead Mumbai is intentional as the chosen fictional texts reminisce, in a way the fading of a utilitarian cityscape post-baptism of Bombay to Mumbai.

cultural, political, historical, anthropological, demographical, spatial, literal, regional, communal, linguistic and religious perspectives via different modes of representation. The coexistence of heterogeneity and homogeneity renders Bombay as a cosmopolitan city. The diversity of the city has exclusively been captured from both the physical as well as the social dimensions by the formidable pillars that constitute IWE today; Salman Rushdie's *magnum opus*, *Midnight's Children* (1981) being a fine illustration. Most of his eagerly sought subsequent novels such as *The Satanic Verses* (1988), *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995) and *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999) delve deep into the multifarious layers of this city. Besides Rushdie, the list that contains names of the authors who have exploited the spatiality of Bombay include Rohinton Mistry, Kiran Nagarkar, Kamala Markandya (*Bombay Tiger* 2008, her posthumous work), Thrity Umrigar and so on.

This perpetual credibility of Bombay as a suitable choice of setting or sometimes even as the all persevering eye of the fictional text, among the writers intrigues one. Even though the shore of contemporary Indian Writing in English<sup>4</sup> is flooding with novels that attempt the spatial representation of other metropolises in India and the lived experiences, yet no other city emanates such sheer vigour to an author's creative instincts as Bombay does: "...cosmopolitan, energetic and chaotic Mumbai, where the rich live cheek-by-jowl with the poor, is the city where the story-tellers from Rushdie to Vikram Chandra to Kiran Nagarkar to Manu Joseph are turning for inspiration and fodder. (Biswas n. pag.). The manipulation of this postcolonial urban space as a robust metaphorical conceit by writers to concoct their narratives is thoroughly encouraged by publishers as well. While promoting the sales of Manu Joseph's debut *Serious Men* (2010), which too is set in the slums of Bombay, the chief editor of HarperCollins, V. K. Karthika states: "It's like the city is teeming with stories just waiting to be picked up. Or maybe it's to do with the number of immigrant writers who've made it their home and as new immigrants, are constantly taking stock of their new environment" (Biswas n.pag.). The crucial factors that guarantees the vitality of Bombay as a significant literary as well as cultural locale are its cosmopolitan ambience, heterogeneity, multiculturalism and the incongruous presence of dichotomies like rich/poor, center/margin, powerful/powerless and privileged/deprived which provide scope for debate on the irrationalities of urbanization, increasing inequality and ambivalent migrant identities. Hence, Bombay is distinguished as a concrete and symbolic entity of ambitions, aspirations and trepidations.

### **Bombay: City of Dreams/Extremes<sup>5</sup>**

City as a significant spatial imagination gains prominence in literary as well as cultural studies especially, since Edward Said's critical exploration of the manipulation of the tropes of colonial space in his "Imaginative Geography and its Representations" in *Orientalism* (1978 49-72). Raymond Williams considers the city and the country "as fundamental ways of life" (*The Country and the City* 1). He theorizes the heightened prominence, the city as a location has come to acquire: "the city has gathered the idea of an achieved centre: of learning, communication, light ... a place of noise, worldliness and ambition" (*The Country and the City* 1). Bombay is a globalized, nevertheless a postcolonial city which has become

<sup>4</sup>Hereafter the abbreviation IWE for Indian Writing in English will be used.

<sup>5</sup>The phrase "city of dreams/extremes, where the dream part is adopted from the colloquial references on Bombay circulating in the realm of popular culture which has gained the status of being a common knowledge and the phrase "city of extreme" is borrowed from the interview by Sonia Phalnikar which appeared in DW-WORLD.DE on 7 Oct.2006.

an abode of people from different walks of life. The city juxtaposes both the colonial past and not only the postcolonial, but also the post-liberalization present through its shifting architecture and lifestyle. The city has successfully received the surprises and borne with the shocks of modernity, postmodernity, and globalization. The postcolonial cities like Bombay/Mumbai, discerns Rashmi Varma in *The Postcolonial City and Its Subjects: London, Nairobi, Bombay* (2012) have gone beyond the theoretical definitions of either modernism or postmodernism: "...postcolonial cities produce a proliferation of subjects and collectivities difficult to categorize within the terms deployed in modernist as well as postmodernist discourses" (1). Varma tries to theorize the whole concept of "symbolic relation of belonging" (1) in the postcolonial city from a renovated perspective within the context of the postcolonial city "that is riddled simultaneously with imperial legacies and nationalist re-inscriptions of spatial practices, as well as with the complexity of representing "difference" within the city, situated as it is within a global capitalist order" (1). In the global context metropolises reappear as entities of oppression, marginalization and subservience. The postcolonial city in the context of the contemporary spatial discourse, exists "as a conjunctural space" (Varma 1) that regenerates an indispensable aggregation of "historical events, material bodies, structural forces and representational economies which" mobilizes refashioned hegemonic binaries "of domination and resistance, centers and peripheries, and the formation of new political subjects" (Varma 1). Bombay as a postcolonial city offers ample opportunity to reflect upon the conjunctures of marginality, subordination, subservience, and multicplity as well as the complexity of identities. This urban space even after the dilapidation of its culturally inherited cosmopolitanism and hybridity, elicits a huge migrant inflow. As the city copes with the penetration of neo-capitalist economic world order; the socio-political, cultural and economic disparities widen which is accompanied with the suffocation of the urban populace as the spatial comforts diminish. Yet, Bombay is popularly known as the city of dreams, probably for two things—the presence of the Bollywood glamour and the allegorical belief of the reciprocation of desires for the daring and the talented. This mythical aspect is what draws innumerable migrants to the metropolis, besides its spatial limitations. The array of vicissitudes this metropolis supplies has been conceptualized in the Bombay narratives. The post-liberalization Indian fiction in English has adopted harsh criticism towards these asymmetrical socio-cultural and political modalities prevalent in Bombay. The deterioration of the secular appeal and the egalitarian ambience are the prime reasons for demarking Bombay as "a city of extremes" as Tyrewala states in one of his interviews (Phalnikar n.pag.). The prototype of extremities, nevertheless alludes to the struggles for survival made by the downtrodden as well as the middle-class population of the city. Some other critical blots that this urban space bears are the existence of the notorious underworld, the overcrowded, stinking slums, the infamous brothels, drugs, human trafficking and last but not the least communal clashes.

Major portions of the pre-millennial novels as well as the post-liberalization fiction based on the metropole, are largely nostalgic recollections and contemplations on an egalitarian Bombay; a pre-Mumbai experience. Some of them mourn the loss of the warm hospitality and flexibility which was an asset to Bombay that fades away especially since being plagued with Hindu-Muslim division and sectarian conflicts as Bombay descends to Mumbai. After Rushdie's entry to the limelight, the Bombay novels project a diasporic touch of nostalgia and angst for the city. Through the nostalgic re-projection of Bombay in their fictional texts, these authors try to claim a right over the memory of this cluttered, crowded, yet open-ended

cityscape during their brief stay: "Bombay is a city built by foreigners upon reclaimed land; I, who had been away so long that I almost qualified for the title, was gripped by the conviction that I, too, had a city and a history to reclaim," (Rushdie 10). Contemporaries of Rushdie and the authors who were part of this lost environ seem to be happy in being preoccupied with this dreamy past history of the city: "When writers fall in love with cities, they often don't fall in love with cities, in general. They often fall in love with the city at a particular point in time" (Rushdie qtd. in Biswas n.pag.). The common interest these Indian English writers have in the enigmatic urbanity of Bombay is neither a novel aspect nor a spontaneous facet of this genre. IWE from its infancy itself, contemplates on the spatial experiences of erstwhile colonial/postcolonial cities; in a few instances fictional ones too as Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* and R. K. Narayan's *Malgudi*, but as the genre evolves into a formidable literary space, the representational politics focuses entirely on the showcasing of the seething underbelly of the globalized urban centres of post-liberalized India. In "Urban India Re-Orientalised," in *Re-Orientalism and Indian Writing in English*, one of the proponents of re-Orientalism theoretical practice, Om Prakash Dwivedi, briefly traces the expansion of this trend in post-Rushdie and post-millennial fiction:

For even at a cursory glance, one would find the IWE [Indian Writing in English] of the colonial and early postcolonial period dealt mostly with small towns, cities, and village ... However the concept of hybridity cosmopolitanism, and multiculturalism entailed by globalization changed the coverage of IWE. The change becomes all the more visible in post-Rushdie fiction, where one witnesses a totally new India plagued with destitution, corruption, and confusion (81-82).

Bombay novels of the post-Rushdie phase seem to be obsessed with the hitherto unknown Bombay, whose reconfiguration is often grotesque, bleak and at certain instances terrifyingly violent. Narratives carrying such projections are now classified in the new template referred to as the fictional testaments of "Dark India" (Lau and Mendes 137). Post-liberalization Indian English fictions such as Vikram Chandra's *Sacred Games* (2006), Vikas Swarup's *Q&A* (2005), Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* (2008), Indira Sinha's *Animal's People* (2008), Altaf Tyrewala's *No God in Sight* (2005), Jeet Thayil's *Narcopolis* (2012), Manil Suri's *The City of Devi* (2013), Somnath Batabyal's *The Price You Pay* (2013), and Lavanya Sankaran's *The Hope Factory* (2013) are a few instances that project and re-project the perverted images of other Indian urban spaces as a dystopian saga.

Contemporary fictional constructions of urban spatial politics attune to "the recent literary wave of "Dark India"" (Dwivedi 31) are noticeable for their imaging the city as a site of inequality; poverty; cultural, regional, linguistic struggles; and the formations and diversifications of identities. The proliferation of such dark (re)presentations of the cityscape in the literary market prominently monopolized by Western publishers enables a medium via the production, circulation and dissemination of cultural otherness for the affluent audiences situated both in the Third and First World academic and literary cubicles. The research paper endeavours to critically examine the debut novels of Altaf Tyrewala and Jeet Thayil as textual sites of discrepant representation and flamboyant staging of the marginal souls of the cityscape to accommodate the interest of the global leisurely practices. This section is conceived as a prelude to the importance of Bombay as a literary motif by tracing a brief history of the representation of cityscape in Indian English Fiction.

### Reified Cultural “Others”: *Strategic Exoticism*

Postcolonial writings critiquing and challenging the notions of colonial hegemony and imperial hierarchy, signifies an “index of resistance, a perceived imperative to rewrite the social text of continuing imperial dominance” (Huggan, *Peter Carey* 3). Besides being a discourse of imperial resistance, “the term also circulates as a token of cultural value; it functions as a sales-tag in the context of today's globalized commodity culture” (Huggan ix). The recent critical accusation against the burgeoning institutionalization of postcolonialism in the theoretical discourse has been the possible manipulation of resistance writing and critique of colonial power structures to meet neo-colonial ends within the current world order of global neo-capitalism (Huggan ix). If the recent promotion of IWE in the Western literary market, and the escalation of demand for the subversively grotesque (re)presentations of India in social and fictional texts is taken into consideration, the selective boosting of certain types of narratives from “the localized agencies of resistance” (Huggan ix) within the global literary market, and the cultural capital accumulation through the exclusive circulation of exoticized symbols of cultural otherness from the part of the presupposed elitist ethnic mediators of marginal cultures, leads to the “cultural commodification” (Huggan ix) of alterity. The production and circulation of altered images of eastern cultural practices, socio-political discourses and the spatiality of former colonies, determined by the push and pull of the neocolonial capitalist regimes, results in the commodification, reification<sup>6</sup> and exoticization of the stereotyped 'Other' for the sake of western consumption preferences: “...exoticism may be understood conventionally as an aestheticising process through which the cultural other is translated, relayed back through the familiar” (Huggan ix).

As Huggan explains in *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the margins*; though the word exotic refers to anything foreign, unusual and strange; in the gamut of postcolonial discourse, exoticism acts as a hegemonic system which provides significant modalities to perceive objects/subjects, often in an aesthetic manner, as remotely distinct, eerie, cryptic and awe-inspiring; however proficiently wangles the colonial gaze to observe, outline and objectify altered otherness (Huggan 13). Thus the exotic performs dialectically as a *symbolic system*<sup>7</sup> (Huggan 13), that renders those different from the colonizer in a comprehensive structure, recasting the other as predictable nevertheless sustaining an imbalanced unfamiliarity which impressively minimizes approximation “since the exotic is ... kept at arm's length rather than taken as one's own” (Foster 22). It is unfortunate that the revamped avatars of colonial, or to be precise, neo-colonial exoticization has hardly come under the purview of postcolonial criticism. Since “aesthetic *perceptions*”<sup>8</sup> (Huggan ix) by nature never degenerates, nonetheless reintegrates as new forms in different epochs. Such is the case with the colonized gaze over the other which persistently seeks to discover and re-discover renewed aesthetic means to restore the distorted spectacle, as “to culture in the service of empire” (Arac and Ritov 3). In the context of global capitalism the colonial discourse of exoticism has been redeployed in an asymmetrical mode which ends up either in critiquing the neo-colonial power structures or succeeds in the aggregation of economic profit through the fetishization

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<sup>6</sup>Socio-cultural discourses being rendered in an objective manner especially from the perspective of commerce that these relations are relegated to the status of mere objects; in this context the object gains an active significance; on the other, social relations are dismissed as subjects of passivity. Marxian concepts like alienation and commodity fetishization are in correlation to reification.

<sup>7</sup>Emphasis in the original source text.

<sup>8</sup>Emphasis in the original source text.

and reification of culturally othered commodities which Huggan coins as “strategic exoticism” (xi).

Globalization has modified the availability of the exotic from the global cultural hubs to commercial spaces through the newly constructed means of exoticism (Huggan 15). The nexus with this refashioned exoticism to its colonial counterpart is not the remoteness, but rather the “*proximity*”<sup>9</sup> (Huggan 15) in their availability in the retail stores adjacent to the consumer:

The plethora of exotic products currently available in the marketplace suggests, however, a rather different dimension to the global 'spectacularisation' of cultural difference. Late twentieth-century exoticisms are the products, less of the expansion of the nation than of a worldwide *market* – exoticism has shifted, that is, from a more or less privileged mode of aesthetic perception to an increasingly global mode of mass-market consumption (Huggan 15).

Akin to the shift in the proximity of the exotica, the modalities through which the reification of cultural otherness is mediated has far more become exclusive. If imperial representation portrays the East as the negative binary opposite of the West, neo-colonial modes of creating and disseminating cultural difference has shifted to the Orientals' court. Showcasing marginality and cultural otherness through the self-orientalisation from the part of the Orientals themselves has been key to the theoretical principle proposed by re-Orientalism. The fundamental text that redefines the self-orientation performed by the presumed eastern emissaries is the rhetorical essay, “Re-Orientalism: The Perpetration and Development of Orientalism by Orientals,” by Lisa Lau.

Re-Orientalism is concerned with the proliferation of eastern self-representation, as the East has achieved more visibility in the wake of globalization, yet this self-representations, instead of reducing the inherent colonial heritage of skewed representation of the East as its strange alter ego, enhances the tradition by setting the trajectory of the 'other' anew into the same direction of the colonial enterprise of Orientalism; the only difference is of the orient being the culprit (Lau and Dwivedi 2). As per Lau's definition, re-Orientalism possibly is “an extension of the totalisation that had always been present in the literature imposing the culture, values, attitudes, etc., of a select minority as representative of the diverse majority” (Lau 3). While re-Orientalising the minority cultures, the common hegemonic tactics employed by the Orient writer are, “generalization and totalisation” (Lau 1) of certain ideas, images or contexts that re-emphasize cultural difference; and “the insidious nature of truth claims” (Lau 1). The chosen texts for the study utilize most of the re-Orientalist instruments. Since Lau's critique is on South Asian Women writers, the paper borrows the key theoretical framework at an application level on the select texts of this paper.

Both *Narcopolis* and *No God in Sight* are penned down by Indian English authors and are cultural narratives on the most isolated groups of the city. Tyrewala's *No God in Sight* is centred chiefly on the extremities of communal conflicts and the concomitant segregation of the Muslim populace within the city. The first instance of re-Orientalism is sited as the reaffirmation of authors' cultural and ethnic identity, and this act becomes a necessity for the visibility and appraisal of the West (Lau 12). The deliberate blurring of the boundary between

<sup>9</sup>Emphasis in the original source text.

fiction and reality is the second resort to such reified representations (Lau 15). Here the extensive use of unreliable narrators by the contemporary Indian English authors as opposed to the obsession for authenticity in representation (Lau and Dwivedi 28) is a noteworthy point. Tyrewala and Thayil resort to this technique predominantly. The author arduously, though in the form of miniature portraits, captures the intensity of the religious extremism and its devastating effects on the lives as well as the city itself. The diversity that embodies the city and its people is presented through the structuring of the novel as a collection of individual firsthand narratives that moves like the compartments of a metro rail, colliding into each other. The dramatic aspect of the manipulation of such miniscule observations from the collective is to reduce the responsibility of being authentic of the city life. Same is the case in *Narcopolis*, as the opening chapter successfully confuses the reader about the identity of the narrator from whose point of view the tale will unfold:

... now we're getting to the who of it and I can tell you that I, the I you're imagining at this moment, a thinking someone who's writing these words, who's arranging time in a logical chronological sequence, someone with an overall plan, an engineer-god in the machine, well, that isn't the I who's telling this story, that's the I who's being told,...(1).

Innumerable are the benefits of using an unreliable narrator, observes Lau in her exponential work, *Re-Orientalism and Indian Writing in English*. The use of an unreliable narrator, subverts the traditional nexus of reader-narrator bond, thus altering conventional reading practice. Since inauthentic, the narrator becomes unaccountable for the cultural otherness constructed in the narrative; as the text itself becomes elusive and enigmatic (Lau and Dwivedi 28). Thus the author gets more artistic freedom and escapes from the accusation as well as the burden of remorse of catering to the West. Thayil critiques the whole gamut of authenticity in the scene where he discusses about the issue with Dimple:

I told Dimple that the Professor, if that was what he was, seemed to be an unreliable source, though he was entertaining enough. I said there was nothing wrong with being unreliable. Who wasn't? What, in any case, was the point of being reliable, like a dog or automobile or armchair? I said it was fine with me, as long as he didn't call himself a historian and moral scientist (*Narcopolis* 15).

However the infidelity of the re-Orientalist author emerges from the attempt of ascribing the role of the spokesman of this minority and reclaiming the right to represent them through the exposition of his/her possession of intimate knowledge about this subaltern culture/history. Thayil openly declares that “I wrote this book to create a kind of memorial,...I wanted to honour the people I knew in the opium dens,...I wanted to make some record of a world that no longer exists – except within the pages of a book (Ratnam n.pag.). Similarly, Tyrewala makes a truth claim of having knowledge of the predicaments of Muslim community in Bombay since the aftermath of religious extremism: “I was in the city when the religious riots happened in 1992 and 1993. I grew up in a fairly liberal, middle class Muslim family and I haven't actually suffered directly communalism or religious discrimination” (Phalnikar n.pag.)

Exploitation of the unreliable narrator and the simultaneous assertion of autobiographical evidence ensure the palpability of literary merit of the text and the plausibility of the author's role as the cultural translator for the mainstream audience through the constant supply of

skewed Eastern exotica<sup>10</sup>. The status of the representative of the minority is yet again a contested field. The writings on the resistance of marginality against hegemony are mostly commissioned by cultural elites who fall out of the ambit of minority that they speak for. Identities of Thayil and Tyrewala have an appendage of ethnic minority, however neither are part of the culturally 'othered' nor the so called culturally superior (the western intelligentsia). Access to western education, residing both the First and Third World, the choice of English language, the instrumentality of production-circulation-distribution of the exoticised images, and the whole trajectory of reception, needs to be brought into consideration:

The authority of such representation is clearly problematic in many texts—particularly in those written about the working and lower classes, who themselves do not necessarily (and are unlikely to) read and write in English. English as a choice of writing language is itself controversial when used to “represent” or “present” stories about subalterns; it is a language which the subjects of discussion can hardly access, let alone represent themselves in (Lau and Mendes 138).

Inherent from colonial legacy, English language and its use in India, even today is confined to the elite classes—the upper middle class and the urban populace. Hence the imaging and re-imaging of the putatively subordinate classes incessantly by those belonging to the privileged strata of social ladder, questions the ethics of authority of the self-assumed envoys of cultural marginality (Lau and Mendes 138).

### **“Dark India”: Mainstream Audiences and *Staged Marginalities*<sup>11</sup>**

Contemporary IWE has been criticized for its catering to Western cultural/commercial interests. The current proliferation of English language fiction projecting and (re)presenting a dark India, the binary opposite of shining India is highly debated (Dwivedi 83). The twenty-first century global literary market produced novels representing a grotesquely exotic India as the 'real' India. Vikas Swarup's *Q&A*, Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger* and Jeet Thayil's *Narcopils* were among those fictional texts which received severe accusation of engaging in the “commodity fetishism – within the contemporary order of postcolonial cultural production” (Huggan 18). Madhurita Choudhary and Charul Jain in “Sad, Bad and the Mysterious India: Exploring the Image of the India,” reiterate that three kinds of image are pullulating in the Western marketplace—penury, savagery and despotism (100).

Such grotesque images of India, especially the metropolitan spaces of India; the material conditions of their production-consumption within the neo-colonial market circuit; the economic and celebrity status of the Anglophone-Indian writes, all hint at the attribution of cultural value for marginality (Huggan 20). According to Huggan, marginality is viewed as a positive sign; though a position of socio-cultural and politico-economic exclusion that requires agency, the resistance attains cultural value. The economic value and prestige associated with marginality results into the strategic exoticism and staging of marginality. The theoretical term, “staged marginality” is adapted by Huggan from the critical position of Dean MacCannell, which significantly means the conditions through which the peripheral entities “dramatise their 'subordinate' status for the benefit of a majority audience (xii). In

<sup>10</sup>See Lisa Lau's article "Re-Orientalism: The Perpetration and Development of Orientalism by Orientals" for a detailed understanding of re-Orientalism tropes.

<sup>11</sup>The term is borrowed from Graham Huggan's critical work, *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the margins*, published in 2001.

select instances it could be manipulated for the unravelling and interrogating of hegemonic systems of power (Huggan xii).

The portrayal of the spatiality of Indian cities as sites of oppression has been in great demand. Two such illustrations are the primary sources of this analytic study. A dystopian view of Bombay in *No God in Sight* is pictured through the perspectives collected in the midsection titled “the very beginning.” Babua, a village lad turns into a fanatic to alleviate his frustration emerging out of his impotency; Suleiman confronting his bedridden great grandfather for his folly of converting into Muslim community; and the portrayal of a murderer's hideout in a flat and his contemplation over the use of gun instead of knife and the taste of the blood of the murdered are a few snippets that exhibit the extreme realities of Bombay. The deteriorating livelihoods are further more explored through Yasmin-bai's words: “In this one-room-per-flat colony, everybody changes in their balcony. We bare ourselves to the outside world so the ones who matter inside won't see us exposed” (81). The abysmal situation of the inhabitants reach to a climax in some desolate portraits such as *Amjad, the Slayer of Lesser Life Forms, Avantika, the Idealist* and the six different perspectives of *Sohail Tambawala*, who is mistakenly killed for having the name of a terrorist. Amjad, a butcher at a chicken mart, envisions life in an excruciating manner:

The cage has five levels. The chickens in the top row are fresh arrivals. They come from the farm in round wicker, twice a week, ten at a time, clean and calm and unsuspecting. They gape like awe-struck villagers, not understanding why the old-timers in the racks below are so noisy and difficult. As they begin their row-wise descent to death, these new chickens, worn out by heat, fear and lack of space, gradually become restless and cranky, till at last they turn so unlovable as to deserve to die (133).

The collection of personal asides that constitute Tyrewala's *No God in Sight*, render the macrocosmic vision of Bombay in microcosmic portraits. The striking feature of the novel lies in the kind of moderateness the author carries throughout his critique of the chaotic ambience of Bombay. And this feature puts it apart from Thayil's *Narcopolis*, which records the abysmal history of a vanishing drug culture that had been prevalent in Bombay during the 1970s and 80s. The seething quarters of Shuklaji Street, the brothels, *khanas*, pimps, hijras; the sordid underbelly, the opium history of Bombay has exclusively been traced by Thayil. In Book One: The City of O, Dom Ullis introduces an Indian painter called Newton Pinter Xavier, settled in London to Dimple as he reads the news story on him. When she asks whether he is famous, Dom's reply is that he was a dropout in school for decorating the boys' urinal walls with nude portraits, but Oxford recognized his talent and is a popular figure now in London. This instance is of particular interest as it innocuously critiques the Western desire for exotica, nonetheless, illustrates the showcasing of marginality and strategic exoticism as well:

The genteel British expected him to be some kind of Hindu scholar mystic. Instead, it says here, he paints Christ with more authority than British painters... His altered Christ are more powerful... They are adrift of history. As for geography, they remain firmly out-side the purview of the British isles, and, I suspect, that of the Indian subcontinent. They drip sex, heresy and indiscriminate readings from the psychopathology of everyday life,... She said, He's too angry to think. He's so angry he's homicidal. He wants to make

everything ugly....She said, how can you trust a man like that?...(13-14).

The process of reification of otherness is clearly visible in this passage. In spite of the constructive/imaginative property, such fictional representations of minority experiences are mobilized as culturally divergent commodities. The creators of these manipulative re-projections are taken for granted, despite their multicultural, cosmopolitan, and advantageous status, as cultural agents of the Third World countries; and this misshapen images are reckoned as 'real,' thus, the whole spectrum of postcolonial criticism alchemizes into trendy disciplinary analysis of cultural difference. All this comprises the critical concept that Huggan proposes—the postcolonial exotic (vii).

The exoticization and commodification of Indian metropolises—in this case, imaging and re-imaging Bombay is a re-Orientalist agenda of typecasting the Third World postcolonial cities as sites of failed decolonization (King 2). Amin-bhai's contemplations on leaving Bombay city behind for American in *No God in Sight*, resonates the discontent with decolonization:

Below the howl of take-off, the city of our birth—the nation of our ancestors—will fade into a twinkling sprawl of lights and then into a distant flicker and then it will be gone, gobbled and blackened by distance. *It wasn't worth it*, I will tell myself. And I will repeat, like a mantra, like a dua, *it wasn't worth it, it wasn't worth it, it wasn't worth it*. And even then, if my idiot nostalgia refuses to die, I will remember the protection money demanded, the covert and blatant religious slurs, the riots, the aftermaths, the newborn niece named Nidhi, the rewritten history books, the harassment at the passport office....

Let them have their Hindustan for Hindus (27-28).

The surging of fictions depicting distorted picture of the cityscape makes a dent in the multicultural, hybrid, generic, and plebeian spatiality of postcolonial cities and renders them as “second tire” (Varma 15) cosmopolitan hubs in relation to the First World global cities (Varma 15)<sup>12</sup>. An abominable portrayal of the former colonial metro space, reinstates as well as redirects the colonial gaze, usually perverted, seductive and twisted; thus intensifies the scope of touristic voyeurism (36). “Postcolonial cities,” infers Varma, in the age of globalization, suffer “deep incursions of western capitalist urbanity ... via a representational avalanche of globalized images, signs and commodities,” that furnish locus “for new desires and aspirations and encode a new calculus for success and happiness, for inclusion and exclusion” (15). The material underpinnings associated with the construction of audiences/readers for the consumption of such misrepresentations brings yet another critical concept—the postcolonial audiences<sup>13</sup>. Though Gayatri Spivak contends that the role of audiences as an inessential aspect (qtd. in Bethan Benwell *et. al.* 1), however, the mission of colonial expansion also implies its success in the creation and constitution of specific kinds of audiences and reception (Bethan Benwell *et. al.* 1):

Ien Ang's reservations regarding audience as an identifiable grouping would appear magnified many times within the context of postcolonial studies,

<sup>12</sup>Refer to Rashmi Varma's *The Postcolonial City and Its Subjects: London, Nairobi, Bombay* (2012) for a comprehensive understanding of the postcolonial city.

<sup>13</sup>Refer *Postcolonial Audiences: Readers, Viewers and Reception* (20120, edited by Bethan Benwell *et. al.*, for an exhaustive knowledge on the nature of reception and the role of readers, views and listeners.

where any conception of audience is likely to be global (as well as local), where reading, viewing and listening are frequently activities involving mobile, exilic and diasporic audiences, and where the potential distance between producers and consumers place an increased emphasis on translation and mistranslation (qtd. in Bethan Benwell *et. al.* 1)

The transformation of fictional texts with a postcolonial affiliation, delineating resistance against peripheralization as cultural commodities; the burgeoning production-distribution of such commodities in the western market and the neo-colonial interventions in sustaining this drift are seriously debated in the context of globalization. The contemporary postcolonial scenario is grappling with the re-fangled avatars of the 'Other,' now critically described as re-Orientalism, where the orient self-represents the East, reverting the tradition of imperial representation in a skewed fashion which ensures the recreation of new stereotypes of other for Western consumption. "From its stronghold as the signifier of otherness and inferiority in early textual constructions of the "mystical East,"" remarks V.G. Julie Rajan and Atreyee Phukan, "the trope of the exotic now has its function as a marker of desirability for post-colonial products that allow knowledge itself to become a possession" (2). The availability of postcolonial literatures as fetishized exotic commodities; the varying degrees of global pressure exercised over the supply-demand circuit within the context of neo-capitalist discourses; the increasing re-Orientalist tendencies and strategic exoticization through the obvious staging of ethnic identities and the growing celebrity aura around the cultural mediators; the construction, categorization and consolidation of literary canons and ad hoc audiences and so on are a few complicated terrains that insists serious deliberations within the purview of postcolonial criticism.

In conclusion, the critical analysis reveals that the western audiences are deliberately in need of culturally exotic images of the East which are prominently dark and unpleasant representations of marginality as the presence of the 'other' always ensures the binary opposition of identities, the East-West dichotomy which invariably lends the West an upper hand in the politics of representation. The western desires for the exotic 'other' translates into the production and dissemination of "staged marginality" (Huggan xi) for the benefit of the western intelligentsia, and provides economic viability for the pre-supposed cultural translators between the periphery and the margins. The generalization of particular literary topics and tastes eases the politics of literary prizing which pressurizes authors to emulate the popular formulas of representation in order to elevate themselves as the Third World intellectual locus. The monopolization of western publishing industry encourages the production of exaggaratingly malformed images of the East: the publishers of *No God in Sight* (Penguin Books) and *Narcopolis* (Faber & Faber) underscores this point. These writers never hail from the marginal spaces of the Third World; still they act as emissaries of the marginalized entities to relate to the West. The irony lies in the fact that these representatives are minority in comparison to the First World intellectuals. These elite writers by promising agency draw on the experiences of the oppressed at an imaginative level in order to elevate themselves in the western centers of excellence. The privileged envoy's portraits of the subjugated neither reach to this voiceless class and nor causes the erasure of centre/periphery dichotomy; instead reinforces the cultural imbalance.

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## M.T. Vasudevan Nair's *Mist* : A Poetry on Waiting

### Abstract

*This article attempts to make a study on M.T Vasudevan Nair's Mist with a special high light on the theme of waiting. M.T. Vasudevan Nair undoubtedly is an epoch in Malayalam literature. He proved himself as a novelist, script writer, short story writer and so on. M.T's novella Mist is set in a totally different background as far as the rest of his works are concerned. The novella Mist is all about Vimala, a teacher in a boarding school in Nainital. She engages herself in an actionless action called waiting. She is waiting for her lover Sudhir Kumar Misra to come back in the month of May. He left her years back with an assurance that he would be back shortly. They spent so many warm moments together and Vimala is waiting for him from then onwards. Mist adds on to the ambiguity in her mind as both her mind and mist are clear at times and mysterious at other times. M.T is deliberate when he sets Nainital as the background of the plot because Vimala like Nainital beautifies herself during the seasons with full of anticipation. There are a few more characters also who are engaged in waiting. One is Buddhu, a lad who owns a boat namely May Flower. He waits for a white man to come in any of the seasons. The man is none other than his illegitimate father. He keeps a time spoiled photograph of the man with which he believes he can identify the person from the tourists visiting Nainital. Another person is a Sardharji who is a cancer patient. He waits for his close companion, death. They all are one the move at one hand, but remains frozen on the other hand. Though waiting is a much used theme in literature, Mist differs in the sense that there is a charm in the setting and in the characterization. The monotony and desperation of waiting transfer to a longing sense which acquires a romantic nature.*

*With the poetic style adopted by the author, the novella attains a poetic charm and beauty though it does not deal with a complex plot or complicated situations. Waiting, a thing of disappointment enjoys a poetic charm when M.T. handles it. Thus the study succeeds in reading the novella as a piece of poetry with all poetic qualities.*

**Key Words :** Novella, Narrative, Saga, Mist

It's hard to wait around for something one might know will never happen. But it's even harder to give up when one thinks it's everything one wants. Human predicament is best explained by the phenomenon called waiting. Next moment brings a paramount of anticipation. What the next moment brings, pleasure or pain; good or bad; life or death, the need to understand is the root cause of all sufferings. All live with a pre fabricated illusion\_ what we want should happen.

M.T. Vasudevan Nair, the renowned multifaceted writer of Malayalam takes a different move in *Mist*. The locale shifts from the traditional nair tharavadu to the snowy hills of Nainital. When stories flow out of the soul, it is poetry. (Nair 51). *Mist* of course have flown out of the writer's heart. It becomes obvious once we go through the novella *Mist*. It is certain that MT has adopted a poetic style to outline the novel mist. The protagonist Vimala, like

Nainidevi is engaged in an actionless action waiting. When love failure becomes an object to make a stationery life live, the story of Vimala attains a poetic beauty. As she weaves the threads of imagination, waiting nourishes the poetic charm of the story of Vimala. Besides, MT's use of a language pregnant with meaning, symbolic and beautiful invites nature also as an element to constitute the poem. Nature often is a memory note of Autumn to Vimala.

The bitter experiences of life never reduced the charm of the woman, Vimala. Her memories and even her mind are novel and beautiful. Her contemplations always drift like clear clouds. Mist sometimes becomes her mind itself. Occasionally it creates a sort of vague picture which soon paves way to vivid images. Thus Nainital, the locale for the story becomes symbolic, for it is a hill range where mist plays hide and seek. The beauty of the place is so inspiring that people rush there to dissolve themselves. Yet Nainital waits for newer seasons with the expectation of newer faces, or old faces contributing to her bliss.

The novella unveils the story of Vimala through a series of broken and disruptive pictures. Vimala is waiting for the never returned guy, Sudhir Kumar Misra. Even when it is as clear as daylight that he never comes, he becomes a hope for her to expect and to wait for in any new season. As Russel Puts it, "Waiting is painful. Forgetting is painful. But not knowing which to do is the worst kind of suffering."(google)

It was before nine years that they have met for the first time. They shared their passionate affair filled with promises. They enjoyed the bliss of togetherness for a few days. Then, he bade farewell to her, presenting her with a moment to cherish life long. She is sure that "this moment had been there, waiting for us on the long road of time." (Nair9). Then onwards the moments of life becomes cold as mist, but had its own beauty as it offered her a newer and fresher hope. He made her select a sweater making her think that he has to give it to someone else. That sweater, with musical notations embroidered on it was given to Vimala herself by Sudhir. She keeps it as a part of her life, and that adds to the memory of moments she spent with him.

Vimala is tied to her family, in addition to Sudhir. She has all bonds - father, mother brother and sister. She recollects the picture of her father "a man whose eyes commanded others, a man who enjoyed others obeying him....., it was that man, weather -beaten with experience, who had been lying helpless on the bed." (Nair 23). This picture brings an inexplicable pain to Vimala's mind. Her mother, as if strange to the conditions, decorates herself and goes out always, saying something about calling at Mrs. BhatNagar's House, but her actual interest is to enjoy herself in company of her lover Mr. Alfred Gomez. Vimala's brother, Babu always blackmails their mother at the expense of the affair. Anitha, Vimala's sister also has a dangerous affair, according to Vimala. So on the whole, the turnout and confusion in the home makes it a hell, in Vimala's point of view. The thought of it evokes only hatred in her mind. She always wishes to keep away from that hell. In order to do that, she joined in a far away school in Nainital as a teacher. And the love affair which she developed there offers a new meaning to her life.

In the school Vimala is given the room of another teacher namely Pushpa Sarkar who was notorious because she once invited a youth to her room. Consequently she was dismissed from the school. That room offers better privacy to Vimala than any other rooms in the building. Being comfortable in the place, Vimala never goes home for any of the vacations. She answers the question of children "Miss when are you leaving?." (Nair. 4) with "tomorrow" (Nair4). This is the tragedy in Vimala's life. She has no today to call her own. She

says "Here time lays imprisoned like the water in the mountain lake"(Nair17). Her yesterdays and tomorrows are opened before readers as through mist. Today's are frozen in her life and it bored always her with its bleakness. The novella depicts that boredom right from the beginning. The boredom brings a kind of silence to her existence. But for her, silence is often felt as music. "It is the strange harmony of sounds." (Nair3) for her. It is this harmony that makes *Mist* a piece of poetry. It is the same that enhances the beauty of Vimala's waiting.

During the process of waiting, Vimala is not spared of the recognition of the changes happening to herself and to the surroundings. She thinks that while the room made notorious by Pushpa Sarkar remained a frozen pool, in the Golden Nook, many faces came and went. (Nair 34). Even while she keeps indifference towards the changes, she yearns for another spring in Kumayun Hills, that might be fulfilling her dreams. Since the loneliness of the next day haunts her, sleep withdraws from the present. When she has to encounter with the much expected death swishes to proclaim it to the world over and again. Such a situation makes even minutes longer to her.

She at once intends to escape to her own world when she is before the dead body of her father. She could enjoy the coolness of the journey back to her room from her house after the funeral. Then we are told that she could listen to the footsteps of the travellers from the dry, parched earth far away, who rushed to her world hungry for the hills, mists, valleys and lakes. From the "footsteps around her tomb" (Nair 42), we come to know that beyond the charm of the place, the frozen condition of waiting has affected her badly. But still ONV had named *Mist* a narrative poem. (231) For him what makes it a poem is the pictures it depicts which is drawn of the colour of memories.

Waiting for someone and the chance for fulfillment is remote. Even then it becomes a ritual in our life, not creating any boredom and at last the motto of life becoming waiting. This can be a vulnerable theme in literature. The story of Vimala can take the turn of a story speaking about betrayal or it could be a story of boredom. Such a theme, which is as old as human race becomes a melody in MT's hand. ONV asks "(..)has waiting an end? if there, will it be a happy one or a sad one?. The questions are irrelevant. Waiting is important. Waiting is not an aim, not a way, but it is life itself." (233).

Waiting has different faces and feelings. It is universal as well. Waiting is a constant process whether it is deliberately or not. Even the city is waiting for the month of May. It beautifies its face so as to greet strange visitors. As Vimala started waiting from a month of May, she feels contempt to the city that decorates too much. The novella unveils another character, Buddha who also waits for May. His boat Mayflower is ruined by time as Vimala is. Buddha, who is called as Gora saheb is told by his mother that he is a whiteman's son. Now he is an orphan, waiting for his father to come, in any of the seasons in Nainital. He is the by-product of a white man enjoying a young girl brought to him by a pimp. Thus he remains as one of the momentos of that white man's stay in the lake city. (Nair14). Buddha like Vimala is in perpetual waiting, forgetting the passage of time. Each season brings a new hope to him and he says "I feel I shall see this time.." (Nair 14). Though he has an ocean of words inside, he knows that he could not utter even a single word, when he faces his father. Like him, Vimala also wishes to see Sudhir- just to see. Buddha keeps a time spoiled photograph of the whiteman to identify him and keeps on waiting for Mays to come in his Mayflower.

By portraying the characters who are waiting, MT says that " the whole world was waiting (..... One day he would come again... You and I, we have all been waiting for ages. On the rocks of ages, snow would fall and melt, and again the mist would form crusts on them.

We all are waiting"(17)

As Vimala is waiting for the fulfillment of her dreams, she never fails to understand Buddha. He arouses sympathy in her dreams, she never fails to understand Buddha. He arouses sympathy in her mind, when he ask her whether all whitemen have left the country.

There is yet another character, a sardharji representing the face of the permanent truth called death. Though Vimala didnt like company on the track where memories slept in silence, he once accompanied her to china peak. He said then that Death is a clown with no stage sense (Nair 4). He was a man who used to talk only to himself. Now he is able to talk even to the things like rocks. Even when he speaks lesser, he could reach the depth of others hearts easily. On the journey, he occasionally talked about a friend who who gave him a bonus of four months life, Which was denied for a lung cancer patient normally. Besides, he demands an evening to be borrowed from Vimala and he leaves the place one day without clearing the debt. Though his picture seems to have attained completion in the novella, MT finishes his story when it approaches an end. He is the man who reminded Vimala to smile, and smilingly he waits for the friend, death.

Amidst such characters Vimala also is imprisoned in time. In such a situation, she says to Buddha "standing on the peak of time, tearing the veil of years and generations, if we could peep in (...)" (Nair 52) and she sighs later " We can only peep so far in to our future and no further. "Nair 52) This brings to the readers mind, the desperation of waiting. It at once succeeds in blending the charm and coldness of waiting through mist simultaneously.

Thus *Mist* becomes a beautiful poem depicting the story of a lonely man's plight in life. Even when man realises the uselessness of waiting he continues waiting with hope which actually is the trick of life. The basic relations for waiting appears to be pre-destined there. Waiting thus becomes a saga itself for one to keep life live. The mysterious and ambiguous mist portrays characters who are mysterious.

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## From Ocean to Land : A Metaphorical Transformation of Ariel's World in the Disney Movie *The Little Mermaid*

“Places are fragmentary and inward-turning histories, pasts that others are not allowed to read, accumulated times that can be unfolded but like stories held in reserve, remaining in an enigmatic state, symbolizations encysted in the pain or pleasure of the body. 'I feel good here': the well-being under-expressed in the language it appears in like a fleeting glimmer is a spatial practice.”

- Michel de Certeau

Fairy tales are the most pure and the simplest genre of literature. Although these fairy tales are assumed as children's literature, it has a charm that amuses the readers of all ages. The key purpose of this fairy tale tradition which had its origin through oral folktales, were to create communal bond during the inexplicable forces of nature or to provide hope on the brink of catastrophe to the world. Although they celebrate a better world which persisted through “spells, enchantments, disenchantments, resurrection and re-creations” (Zips 3) later it was considered as “a social symbolical act that could have implications for the education of children and the future of society” (Zips 149). This mesmerising fascination for fantasy escalated with the evolution of cartoon and animated fairy tales propagated by Walt Disney playing a dynamic role in the world of entertainment. He “cast a spell on the fairy tale narrative” and moulded it to a “Westernised culture of wholesome family entertainment” (Zips 333) of the Twentieth century. Beginning with the first animated feature film *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1934), the Walt Disney Company continues its production to the latest *Moana* (2016). The bold and the beautiful princesses of Disney instructed, amused, warned, initiated and enlightened the world presenting before the audience wide vagaries of cultures, values and belief systems in the form of imaginative magical worlds filled with wonders and miracles.

As Vladimir Propp points out in his notes on fairy tales, each fairy tale has its own internal and easily recognisable logic which is explicit in the Disney movies. They are the human marks invested with desire and passion. This paper attempts to decipher the pervasive effect of space on the famous Disney movie *The Little Mermaid* (1989) based on Hans Christian Andersen's Danish fairy tale *The Little Mermaid* (1836) - the life of two varied definite groups of people: the merpeople of the ocean and the humans in the land. The merpeople who are half human and half fish live with other aquatic animals, have their own physical space under the ocean ruled by the King Triton where as human beings live in the land in their sophisticated dwellings. The paper tries to analyse how the life of these aquatic creatures can be interpreted as the life of the villages in the country side with their charm and serenity, juxtaposing it with humans in the land with that of the life of the city men. The space conflict

between the ocean and the land presented in an age old fairy tale suitably premeditates with the opposed energies of the era: the country and the city. Country and the city are two varied spaces that stand for their diversities “in the experiences of human communities” (Raymonds 1). Ocean exemplifies the rural village, which depicts the natural way of life emitting peace, innocence and virtue. On the other hand, the life at the shore portrays the city life with its civilisation, worldliness and ambitions. City has always been a site of attraction and has a pull factor as it exhibits an object of imagination and fantasy to an outsider. Being “the centre, the activity, the light” (Raymonds 5) of power since industrial revolution, it excites the ordinary country side villagers to migrate to the urban space to objectify their desires. The great buildings of the city, houses, the streets with their lights, strange crowds, noises and rush of the day fantasises a villager. This concept is figured equally in the literature by Raymond Williams in his *Country and the City*; whereas the spatiality of urban life is explored by the twentieth century space theorists Michel de Certeau in his thesis on *The Practice of Everyday Life* and Henri Lefebvre in his *Writings on Cities*.

The movie visualises two spaces – a waterly world of merpeople and the adjoining human world. The merworld contrasts with the human world with its simple way of living. The castle decorated with pearls, cloisters as beds, conch shells as vehicles, sea horses and dolphins as mounts and the virtuous merfolk with their innocence and tranquillity make it sublime. They are never envious of the sophisticated life of the humans rather considers them as cunning, crooked and dangerous. This is apparent when King Triton argues with his daughter Ariel on humans. “They're dangerous. Do you think I want to see my youngest daughter snared by some fish-eater's hook?” (Qtd from the film) The movie begins with Prince Eric's voyage on his ship while the merry sailors catch fish and sing about the fathom beneath. Few sailors are aware of the underwater kingdom, Atlanta and their King Triton while Grimsby, the advisor of Prince Eric ignores it considering it a nautical nonsense to live a life without proper comforts and luxuries under the deep blue sea. Though the humans depend on the ocean for their living, the discordance between these two territories are obvious when the ship as an artefact crashes the waves and devours the serenity of the ocean and its creatures. Heaps of fish caught by the sailors and Grimsby's nausea and ignorance regarding the ocean mirrors the attitude of humans considering the oceanic world as backward and subaltern.

Ariel is the sixteen year old mermaid, youngest daughter of King Triton whose passion for the human world makes her an outcast among the merpeople. Like a villager who craves to be part of the sparkling world of the city life, she longed to be a part of the human world as their gadgets, artefacts and manners engrossed her. Her fascination is observed in her secret cavern filled with abundance of material artifacts-clocks, jewel box, binoculars, spoons, forks, knives, plates, candle stands, spectacles, trinkets, statue of dancing couple and picture of the penitent Magdalene-gathered from the wrecked ships. Her craving for human artefact is befittingly depicted in the initial scene of Ariel when she forgets her musical debut for her father at the concert supervised by the court composer Sebastian, the crab while excavating a wrecked ship with her fish friend, Flounder. The collected strange things were taken to Scuttle, an amateur seagull who drivels about the artefacts. Like Ariel, Scuttle is also fascinated by the human objects and collects a number of them. To himself and Ariel, he is an expert on humans though he knows very little about them. In spite of this, Scuttle is the only creature that is knowledgeable of both the worlds. Though he misguides Ariel about the identification of various artefacts, like Flounder and Sebastian he too plays an important role

in helping Ariel to achieve her dreams.

Being a tempestuous, rebellious, and free-spirited princess of the ocean, she knew that merpeople are forbidden to go to the surface but whenever she sees a ship at the surface level she swims to the surface and gets enchanted by the charm of the human world. In fact, she wanted her father to understand her appetite for human world, "If only I could make him understand. I just don't see things the way he does. I don't see how a world that makes such wonderful things - could be bad" (Qtd from the film). The notion of feet enthralled her which gave them the freedom to wander, walk and dance rather than confined to a particular space.

"Legs are required for jumpin', dancin'  
Strollin' along down a  
[What's that word again?] street  
Up where they walk  
Up where they run  
Up where they stay all day in the sun  
Wanderin' free  
Wish I could be  
Part of that world". (Qtd from the film)

The tremendous ability to walk free rather than swim desired her to be part of the human world. Thus walking can be connected to Certeau's voyeurs or walkers which is an eminent aspect of daily urban life. City men constructs their own space through walking which he describes "...they are walkers, whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban 'text' they write without being able to read it" (Certeau 93) whereas Ariel wants to wander in the terrestrial world to create her own space. This language of movement which actualises urban makes them walkers or city men whereas the ability to walk makes humans different from merpeople. Ariel craves for the access and autonomy in the human world and longs to wander free without any confinement. Her passion forces her to forget the discrepancies of these two extreme worlds and is smitten by the handsome Prince Eric whom she helps from drowning when the ship sinks during a storm, violating the laws of the ocean. Her obsession is obvious when she insists on the virtue of humanity while King Triton warns and disdains her for saving a human and destroys the statue of Prince Eric which she has at her cavern.

Ariel : You don't even know him.  
Triton : Know him? I don't have to know him. They're all the same. Spineless, savage, harpooning, fish-eaters, incapable of any feeling  
Ariel : Daddy, I love him!  
King Triton : No . . . Have you lost your senses completely? He's a human, you're a mermaid!  
Ariel : I don't care. (Qtd from the film)

Ariel renders the picture of a villager who accomplishes anything to be the part of the sparkling city life. In order to objectify her fantasy- to be a part of the human world, she goes to the wicked sea witch, Ursula and forfeits her voice in return for the legs who traps her voice

in a necklace she wore. Ursula's potion can make her human only for three days unless she gets her kiss of love; else she would be retrieved as a mermaid and has to become a slave to Ursula forever. Ariel knew that if she converts into human forever she had to leave her father and sisters and her magnificent deep blue world but Ursula allures her to sign the contract and trades her voice for human legs. Ariel's desire is overtly embodied in this decision for which she abstains her identity, family and her voice. Though Eric takes her to his palace feeling pity for a dumb girl who is washed off in a shipwreck, he fails to recognise that Ariel was the girl who saved him from drowning as he could only remember the voice of the girl during the mishap.

After the transformation, Ariel loses her identity as a mermaid who fails to swim and is taken to the surface by Flounder and Sebastian. Though Ariel's metamorphosis gives her a new identity as a young girl in the land, she lacks the eminence of an ordinary human being. Though she leaves ocean with the help of Ursula by procuring legs, she fails to assimilate the etiquettes and demeanours followed by humans in their land. Initially she falls out in performing a lot of activities done by humans. She tries to fit into the human world with the little knowledge she had about them. Upon reaching the surface, she covers herself with a rag advised by Scuttle who observes that humans are anxious about fashion. Even Ursula had enlightened Ariel to use her feminine charm to lure men and to be an elegant lady in the land,

“And don't underestimate the importance of body language! Ha!

The men up there don't like a lot of blabber

They think a girl who gossips is a bore

Yes, on land it's much preferred

For ladies not to say a word

And after all, dear, what is idle prattle for?” (Qtd from the film)

She fails to walk properly as moving with legs was something unfamiliar to her. She blows smoke at Grimsby's face, misbehaves at the dining table with weird mannerisms, is astounded at the market and even frightens Prince Eric with her reckless horse riding. This concept of liminality has been introduced by anthropologists van Gennep and Turner, to describe the transitory stage characteristic of rites of passage in various cultures. Upon their ritual exclusion from society, the person enters a liminal zone of indistinction which “represents the midpoint of transition in a status-sequence between two positions”(Viljoen and Merwe 12) and suggests that there is space associated with the threshold. . In her liminal space Ariel she stands between the extremities of being a mermaid and a human being and approximates a kind of mimicry as it suspends her authentic identity as a human being in the land.

Ariel was successful in presenting herself with extreme graciousness to the Prince Eric and other humans despite of her absence of voice. Though she uses fork to straighten her hair as faultily briefed by Scuttle and blows the smoking pipe on Grimsby's face considering it as snarfblat, a musical instrument, she attracts the humans especially Prince Eric with her charm and innocence which she procured from her waterly world. Throughout the movie Ariel can be interpreted as “an image of a simple man from the country arriving with his rural innocence”(Williams 51). When Prince Eric takes Ariel on a tour to his kingdom she is enamoured by every single thing she sees- the market, chickens, puppets, horses, dances and

the lagoon cruise. She enjoys the human world like a flaneur who strolls the urban space: a term Walter Benjamin uses based on the poetry of Charles Baudelaire to depict an urban explorer, the man of leisure, the idler, the connoisseur of the street who is an emblematic archetype of urban, modern experience.

Although love for Prince Eric and the human world were the pull factors that forced Ariel to lose her identity, the kiss of true love could retain her as a permanent resident of the human world. Ariel fails to kiss Eric before the sunset as Ursula hypnotises him using Ariel's voice in the form of a beautiful young maiden, Vanessa and tricks into marrying him. Though Scuttle stops the wedding with the help of other sea creatures by shattering Ursula's necklace returning Ariel's voice and releasing Eric from the spell, Ursula takes Ariel under the sea to enslave her. However, Triton comes to rescue Ariel but fails to break the magically legalised contract made by Ursula rather accepts the exchange of slavery offered to him and is transformed into a polyp by Ursula who takes his crown and trident. Prince Eric who reaches the ocean, to save Ariel, in his rowboat is attacked by Ursula who creates a whirlpool from the ocean floor. As she prepares to kill Ariel with her trident, Prince Eric rams the gigantic Ursula with the bowsprit of the ship there by killing her which results in the removal of curse from King Triton, restoring peace in the ocean.

Moreover, the movie constructs a hierarchy between these two parallel worlds, rendering one literally above the other. It posits the terrestrial space as a rational space where the Prince Eric, proponent of a refined culture, kills the sea witch there by relegating the underwater world as an irrational mystical world. Eric's human world is privileged as the absolute world as he solves the internal complexity of the ocean there by killing Ursula. Ariel's craving to be a part of his world can be inferred as her intense desire to be an exponent of this creative, rational and care free world. The movie reinforces the social hierarchy established between the ocean and terrestrial worlds which juxtapose the hierarchical difference between the country and the city. This binary logic highlights the world view that the city life is more cultured and sensible than the country life which is deemed to be ignorant and illogical. Even Ursula, the sea witch also attempts to position her in the human world there by using Ariel's voice and hypnotising Eric in the form of Vanessa. Her corporal transformation also points out her inner desire to be part of this sophisticated world which is crushed by Scuttle and other sea creatures. Ariel is transformed in to a human permanently by King Triton as he finds Prince Eric suitable for his daughter. The wedding takes place on the ship surrounded by people of both the adjoining worlds: the human world and the sea world, thereby gratifying Ariel's fantasy of romantic union with a human.

There are three songs in this musical fantasy which is an epitome of the relationship between two varied spaces: the ocean and the land. The initial song "Part of the world" (Qtd from the film) is an expression of Ariel's frustrations, hopes, and desires in which she talks about the wonderful external world in which human beings can wander free with their legs irrespective of any definite confinement. Through the song she reflects her ardent desire to be the part of the world that enhances creativity and freedom to its inhabitants. The next song "Under the sea" (Qtd from the film) is sung by Sebastian the crab who is well cognizant of the nature of human beings in the adjacent land. He rebukes Ariel for her strange obsession and tries to acknowledge her with the importance of her natal place as he says, "Down here is your home! Ariel, listen to me. The human world, it's a mess. Life under the sea is better than anything they've got up there". (Qtd from the film) Throughout the song Sebastian glorifies

the deep blue sea and constructs the binary oppositions between land and the ocean symbolizing oppression and freedom, there by didactically supplementing the spatial relation between these two realms. The third song “Poor unfortunate soul” (Qtd from the film) is performed by Ursula, the sea witch during the magical transformation of Ariel's fin into legs encapsulating her voice into a couch shell. Through the process of her dramatic corporal transformation, Ursula's song acquaints Ariel with the human world, its manners and demeanors. Consequently, she negotiates the trading of Ariel's voice in the song in return for the help provided by her which was in fact her design to ensnare King Triton. Posing Ariel, Sebastian, and Ursula within their respective musical narratives, the movie splendidly represents two distinct physical environments with its differences which familiarize us with the city and the country.

*The little mermaid*, the 1989 animated musical fantasy film by Disney, encapsulates a fairy land which exerts its power over space in the form of land and ocean. Thematically the film heralded the contrasting two spaces – the land and the ocean – which is apparently a symbolic representation of opposed values portraying the city-country equation where the concreteness of urban existence competes with the country sides. It captures the diverse worlds with their exuberant differences analogous to the country and the city. Land exemplifies the serene beauty of countryside and the ocean embodies the density, confusion, the impenetrable complexity of the city. Ariel's metamorphosis into a human posits herself as an emblematic figure, similar to a city dweller who revels in the land, sights and spaces, acceding to its overpowering sensual effects. She becomes a sobriquet for those people who leave their maternal pleasures of life to migrate to the urban space for their passion and obsession. The thrilling anonymity of the external world makes her a stranger in a strange land still she apprehensively tries to amend the new world. Being an outcast in her own space, she craves for a space of her dreams. She trades her voice there by voicing her intense desire to follow her dreams and the romantic union with her Prince charming. Thus this Disney film not only employs the spatial metaphor but also a optimistic attitude towards life with its positive ending.

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## A Perspective on Space - Living and Narrative in Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome*

### Abstract

*It is often true that space is much discussed in the arena of literature nowadays. Present spatial turn of literature accelerates the momentum of serious studies in this perspective. Space presented in literature can inform aesthetics, culture, and politics of the world which is familiar to the narrator. The living space of the author can be a powerful source of conception of the narrative space. This aspect of space can actively participate to shape stories, influence the characters, and are represented with human qualities.*

*Space can be described as an unspecific, absolute, infinite entity. It includes not only the physical setting of the fiction instead it encompasses cultural, social, linguistic, racial, political and religious facets. Living space is fairly well acquainted for the author that later reverberates in the narrated space. The living space colored with imagination is occupied in the fictional space.*

*As in the works of Charles Dickens whose living space i.e. Victorian London, presumably generate the themes, characters, plots and events of his literary productions, Amitav Ghosh too profusely depends on his life experiences and the living space to enrich his narrative space.*

*This is an attempt to study the intricate relationship of living space and narrative space in literature especially in *The Calcutta Chromosome* by Amitav Ghosh. Calcutta the physical space of the novel open up the wider aspects like cultural, political, religious through which story and characters are generated. The living space of Calcutta is having much deep rooted relationship with the narrative space of the novel. Through observation and the vivid historical perspective his production of space provides an authentic narrated space where the theme, characters, setting, events are interrelated with the physical space. Based on the critical evaluation of the novel *The Calcutta Chromosome*, the objective is to unveil the author's sense of space and how it was formulated by his own living space.*

Space can be described as an unspecific, absolute, infinite entity. And at the same time it can be categorized as physical and philosophical entity. The living real life space and the narrative space is the two dimensions of the space but may have polygonal aspects of space that are physical, religious, cultural, political, and linguistic phases within it.

What does the term “space” in narratology mean? It is not limited to the representation of a world serving as container for existents and as location for events. It also point out the physically existing environment in which characters live and move .it act as a setting of the story . All the narratives imply a world with spatial extension which otherwise called as story world, text world and diegese. All of these concepts cover both the space- occupying existents and the temporally extending events referred to by narrative discourse. Narrative space both realizes and is determined by living space.

Real-world space is the living space of the author which obviously gets a reflection in his

literary outputs. Narratives are usually situated within real-world space, and the relations between them are far beyond mimetic representation. The actual location of events is sought after by analyzing where it happened, what the major events and issues, the landmarks, historical monuments etc. Certain striking landscape features were replicated in the narrative space without which narration is impossible. Usually the narratives of myth, legend and oral history build a spirit of place which highlights the real space.

It was Stephen Heath in 1976 defined 'narrative space' for the first time. According to him narrative space is how the reader interprets events within their respective landscapes. Later it includes the spaces that are talked about and alluded to, not just what's shown on screen or described in text. So the narrative space in total depicts the multiple aspects of the physical space.

“- Who is interested more and more by life and the world. And that's where my imagination engages with real life, with the lives people lead.”

- Amitav Ghosh

As the words reveals, Amitav Ghosh was always after journeys and the truths revealed through it which obviously mould his literary output. Living space instigates the narrative space whose cultural, religious, political aspects were apparent for the writer. Representing enormous multiplicity of experience and of history was the obligation of the writer.

Many of the Indian writers took pain in observing and recording their living space especially Arun Joshi, Naipaul, Kiran Desai etc. Amitav Ghosh being the prominent figure among them was not an exceptional. Born in Calcutta studied in Delhi, Africa Egypt and England Ghosh easily perceive the life of the people in those places.

Writers like Amitav Ghosh , arun joshi etc were actually help the readers to create stories in relation to geographic locations and make the readers more accessible to the descriptions of the physical space .By using historical landscapes, memorial areas or heritage sites, the spatial situation of the narrative corresponds to the real-world location of the commemorated events will enhance the outlook of the readers towards the physical space .reconnecting stories with physical space will be read in a vivid manner because it can reflect life and society in its varied aspects. Such texts must be read in the presence of their referent is an interesting aspect for a curious reader.

Calcutta his homeland was an incessant inspiration and an endearing space to explain. Its culture, politics religion, beliefs, traditions, rituals etc always fascinated the mind of Ghosh which vividly portrayed in his work. Partly he is familiar with the events and partly he has read about the location and its importance.

“I read a lot and I lived very much within my own head and very much within my own imagination.”

– Ghosh

his words reveals how his reading helps to create a spectacular space before the readers. Calcutta depicted in his work is vivacious when it compared to the living space. The characters like Antar, L Murugan, Lutchman etc signifies their nationality and especially region where they belong.

Calcutta looms large before the eyes of the readers through his portrayal. The life and society of Calcutta during that time is reinvented by the writer which definitely deserve appreciation. The character Antar in the novel is running after the mysterious disappearance of L Murugan in Calcutta. Calcutta during the time of the legendary figure Ronald Ross was illustrated brilliantly. Ronald Ross (13 May 1857 – 16 September 1932), was a British medical doctor who received the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine in 1902 for his work on the transmission of malaria, becoming the first British Nobel laureate, and the first born outside of Europe. His discovery of the malarial parasite in the gastrointestinal tract of a mosquito proved that malaria was transmitted by mosquitoes, and laid the foundation for the method of disease. He worked in the Indian Medical Service for 25 years. It was during his service that he made the groundbreaking medical discovery.

Ghosh was in earnest search for the truth behind such a discovery. Just like a detective he recreated the events that led to the discovery by incorporating imagination along with real life evidences. Calcutta during the beginning of twentieth century was unveiled through his fiction. Antar was the tool of Ghoshn to find the truth about the disappearance of L Murugan whereas L Murugan is instrumental for the discovery of the truth related to the Nobel laureate and his malaria parasite. The background of this study is Calcutta. The significance of the title lies here. it is very true that Murugan has asked to be transferred to Calcutta because of his fascination with the life of Sir Ronald Ross. The Calcutta of Ronald Ross is well separated in time from the Calcutta that Murugan visits, but the New York City of Antar and the Calcutta of Murugan seem to overlap in time, though it is clearly stated in the novel that they are separated by many years.

The novel throws light on the aspects that however through his research into old and lost documents and phone messages, Antar figures out that Murugan had systematically unearthed an underground scientific/mystical movement that could grant eternal life. Fictional aspects add flavors to the story by describing the process through which the disciples of this movement can transfer their chromosomes into another, and gradually become that person or take over that person. In the novel, Ronald Ross did not discover the mysteries of the malaria parasite; it was a group of underground practitioners of a different, mystical "science," natives of India, who helped to guide Ross to the conclusions for which he is famous.

Through the novel Ghosh projected a Calcutta which is the narrated space taking it hues from the living space along with its magical colouring of imagination finally produce an effective background to unravel cultural, political, religious aspects of the society. The characters like Lutchman, Mangala, etc were a real depiction of the Indians who are religious and at the same time having blind faiths in rituals and practices so that they cannot acknowledge the scientific progress and thoughts of Sir Ronald Ross. Antar and Murugan were after such a discovery with a scientific mentality symbolizing the changed individuals of a modernized society.

How narrative space overpowers living space is another aspect which needs meticulous attention. Ghosh deliberately create a narrative space of Calcutta in his novel to highlight the various facets of the place which we could not find out merely from a geographic description. The merging of imagination with the real space brings charm to the narrative. By displaying various characters like L Murugan, Lutchman, Mangala Sonali, Urmila etc the culture, beliefs, rituals, and even politics of Calcutta is unraveled. The towering image of narrative

space is not because of mere description but by the minute observation of the writer who takes a mirror to reflect culture, politics, language, religion of the area which is narrated.

It is often true that a well structured narrative space is more than a mere travelogue. The minutest descriptions of city are available to the readers through words which advocate a clear picture of the city in the mind. Calcutta in its complete dimension disclosed before us through the narrative. Thus the narrative space of Calcutta become more impressive on readers and the life and quest of Ronald Ross became more impressive to the reading public than the biography. Regarding the physical space of Calcutta the role of Ghosh is worth mentioning it. Being a native of Calcutta he is lucid in illustrating all streets and cities. No monuments and shops miss his perception.

Ghosh focused on the various aspects of the living space to generate narrative space which is palpable from the descriptions .what a Calcutta he displayed before us! More than the real Calcutta the narrated space captures our attention. Similarly the New York he presented before the readers is far beyond the real New York. His portrayal of local characters and their beliefs are true to the core which actually shows the practice among the locals in a genuine manner. His depiction of foreign people and their beliefs are accurate because of his acquaintance with the people from places like England, Egypt, and Africa. This novel is talking about the difference between spaces, the living space, the narrated space, Calcutta Vs New York, science vs. religion, and development vs. retreat. How the space is influenced by all this duos is an important aspect to think. No religion bound space even think about the medicines to cure disease. They trusted prayers and fasting can only cure diseases. That will make a difference in the attitude of the people in the field of systems of treatment, language, search for truth, mystified stories.

Twentieth century observed the predominance of spatial form in Literature. The idea behind such a step might be to point out the geography of the text and how literature utilizes physical space for its own ends, not only to create the field of action and the background against which the activities of the characters take place but also to give life to a system of complicated relation of society, its culture, politics, language, race, religion into the structure of the work. As a result the narrated physical space wanted to disclose the divergent aspects of the then existing living space.

It is often true that every place occupies a physical space and is visually perceived and measured in spatial terms. The living space in a way reflected in the works of art revealing its diverse aspects. Generally a community settles and establishes itself in a specific place and it is also influenced by that place in the formation of its own identity, its customs and traditions. So was the case regarding literature. Amitav Ghosh was excellent in creating a narrative space taking traces from his own living space. His novel *The Calcutta Chromosome* reveals how the physical space of Calcutta transformed into the diverse facets of a narrated space. The history of Calcutta and Ronald Ross, strange quackery of Bengalees, Bengali language etc was perceivable in new light by the influence of Ghosh. Exploring new geographical spaces through journeys might be the burning urge of the writer to display vast arena of experience before the readers.

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## Between Love and Piety: The Man More Hated than Hating in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*

### Abstract

*The paper attempts a psychological analysis of the text- Purple Hibiscus. Drawing upon psychoanalytic theory, the paper examines the pattern of repressed behaviours by the major characters and how this has helped to structure the plot and its latent meaning. This pattern of behaviours reveals, through the family dynamics, oedipal complex and other events that explicate certain psychological concepts. Thus, the paper argues that, there is a conspiracy against the hero's father, Eugene, by members of his family, arising from the abandonment of filial piety by Jaja, the hero, himself. Since most of the actions are enacted within the context of familial relationship, most of the repressed behaviours that serve as the basis for this argument could be traced to painful childhood experiences of the characters within the family domain. Relying on evidences from the text, the paper arrives at the disturbing conclusion that the hero's family- nuclear and extended- hate the hero's father more than he does hate them. This has made it possible to examine the pattern of repressed behaviours which informs our argument that there is conspiracy against the hero's father, Eugene.*

**Key Words:** Psychoanalysis, oedipal complex, behaviour, familial, conspiracy.

### Introduction

The survival and preservation of every society depend, among other things, on the nature of the family structure that cumulate into forming and shaping it. A child's first place of socialization, psychological moulding and emotional as well as ideological build-up is the family; as such, the family becomes the nexus of the individual member of the society. When the family structure breaks down, the society inevitably sinks into the abyss of hopelessness. The individuals in such society are hunted by fear: fear of security, food, health and so on. The shortest sentence in *Purple Hibiscus* is one word- 'fear'. It looms large and forms a pall over the events in the story- from the beginning to the end, and is responsible for the initial cracks and the eventual tragedy that befalls the family- the death of Eugene.

Fear, it can be argued, is a product of psychological dysfunction which has its root, most times, in childhood experience. The opening sentence of the story that 'things started to fall apart at home...' can thus be seen as a consequence of this pall of fear that hangs perilously over the family. Fear is an emotion and where it reigns, it engenders hatred and anger. In such circumstance, love, which is a binding force of unity in a healthy home, is banished. Relationship is thus destroyed.

The father's presence is very important to a healthy relationship in the home. Lamb, Pleck, Charnov, and Levine (1987) have conceptualized this presence to include three dimensions of human relationship: interaction, or one-to-one father-child-engagement with each other; accessibility, the father's physical presence near the child without direct interaction; and responsibility, the father's planning for and execution of plans for the child's

benefit or welfare. In each of these dimensions, Eugene fails except probably in the last dimension where it can be said that he provides adequately for his immediate family, of course to the exclusion of his extended family which is very important in the construction of the image of a father figure.

Our emphasis, in this paper, is on the instinctive drives behind most of the actions of the characters in the context of familial setting which provides the bedrock for the child personality development in order to see the debilitating effects on these characters, particularly, the fatal end of Eugene. We further examine the pattern of repressed behaviours by the major characters and how this has helped to structure the plot and its latent meaning.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Psychoanalytic theory has always been a useful theoretical tool in understanding the motivations behind most of our actions, thus providing a great insight into the dynamics of human relationships because as individuals all humans have psychological history that reaches back to our childhood experiences enacted within the family setting. According to Tyson (1999),

When we look at the world through a psychoanalytic lens, we see that it is comprised of individual human beings, each with a psychological history that begins in childhood experiences in the family with patterns of adolescent and adult behaviour that are the direct result of that early experience'(12).

Thus, psychoanalytic theory, to a large extent, is capable of revealing us to our sordid selves and is very useful in explicating the core issues that help to shape our identity-and by extension those of characters in literary texts. This is all the more so because the family domain, within which most of childhood events unfold, provides the incubating ground for most of the psychological dysfunctions that eventually plague individuals. Psychoanalytic theory provides the driving force behind the individuals' actions with a view to providing an insight into the unconscious and repressed painful experiences that goad them on in their relationship with one another.

The specific theory adopted in this paper is the traditional psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud. Though some experts like Pine (1985) have classified psychoanalytic theories into four categories: orthodox or classical psychology, ego psychology, self psychology, and object relations, other theorists like Greenberg and Mitchell (1993) have attempted to reduce the classifications to just two schools: drive/structure model and relational/structure model, attributing the first model to Sigmund Freud (1953-1974) and Anna Freud (1984-1981) including others who are their protégées (Arlow and Brenner,1967, Brenner,1973, Fenichel,1945). The second model is exemplified in the works of Melanie Klein (1964, 1975), WRD Fairbairn (1952), D.W Winnicott (1965,1971, 1975) and Harry Guntrip (1961, 1969, 1971). However, some critics have mixed the two in their works. Such theorists include Heinz Kohut (1971, 1975, 1984) and Otto Keinberg (1975, 1976,1980).

According to McGinnis (2003) in his article, 'The Psychoanalytic Theories of D.W Winnicott as Applied to Rehabilitation':

... the models themselves are based on fundamentally different conceptions of human nature, development and pathology. Specifically the drive/structure theorists emphasize the primacy of drives (instincts), role of

libido and aggression, intra psychic conflict, and the central importance of the Oedipal period. (On the other hand), Relational/Structure theorists emphasize the importance of Oedipal development, self cohesiveness, and their primary care takers (14).

In spite of the conceptual distinctions between the two models however, the fact still remains that familial relationships which exist between children and their primary care givers, particularly, the father and the mother, are germane to the overall emotional and psychological well-being of the child. The home or rather the family provides the first contact point where most of the experiences that eventually shape the personality of the child are encountered. This is perhaps the reason Sigmund Freud psychoanalytic theory is still relevant today in spite of the so many objections to it by non-traditional theorists. McGinnis (2003), in his review of *Psychoanalysis and Art: The Artistic Representation of the Parent/Child Relationship*, edited by Blum, hinted at these objection when he said:

Many objections have been levelled against traditional psychoanalysis, both for its methodological rigidity and for its lack of theoretical rigour. A number of modern psychologists have pointed out that traditional psychoanalysis relies too much on ambiguous data such as dream and free associations without empirical evidence, Freudian theories often seem weak and ultimately fail to initiate standards for treatment. (24)

In spite of these objections, Eagleton (1996) insists that 'Such cures (treatments, *our emphasis*) for Freud, are not achieved by just explaining to the patients what is wrong with him, revealing to him his unconscious motivations. This is part of psychological analytical practice but will not cure anybody in itself' (44).

### **Textual Analysis**

The works of Palkovitz (1997), Amato (1988), Marsighi, Amato, Day and Lamb (2000) have also shown that fathers' economic and social contributions impinge positively on the behaviour of the children. The needs of the children, however, are not solely material but the other two dimensions which relate to emotional and psychological needs of the child, if neglected, can ruin whatever achievement is made at the material level. Eagleton (1996) affirms that while this level of material provision is important for the child, it is also accompanied by pleasure which implicates psychological gratification, a condition which is only achievable where there is love.

The degree of father presence in determining a healthy relationship is taken to a greater height in Newton Rae's *The Father Presence Questionnaire* (2006) where father presence is redefined to include hitherto excluded categories. According to him,

Briefly, we view father presence as including the son's or daughter's relationship with the father, his beliefs about the father, and intergenerational family influences that may promote or undermine a positive father orientation.

The intergenerational family influence accounts for why Eugene neglects his extended family, particularly, his father and sister, whose relationship with his own immediate family contributes to the crack and eventual disintegration of that family. Family relationship is triadic in nature. In this regard, the relationship of both the father and the mother with their

own fathers also affects the feelings and perception of the child about his or her father presence.

Cowan and Cowan (1987) shows that paternal experiences affect the way fathers interact with their children. This is what we have also noticed in the unwholesome paternal experience of Eugene which also reflects in the way he treats his children, Jaja and Kambili. According to Newton (2006), intergenerational family influences include the experiences of both a father's and a mother's experiences with their own fathers and other father figures such as grandfathers, uncles, adult friends of the family, and step fathers in case of divorce. In all of these areas, Eugene's relationship demonstrates unwholesome attitudes and actions driven by psychological dysfunctions which started with his harrowing childhood experience in the hands of the 'good' father and consequently his relationship with his family, particularly, his wife and children.

In the relationship of the father with the child, the mother plays a significant role in constructing a good father image. Quoting Atkins (1981, 1982, 1984), Newton (2006) opines:

When the mother supports the child in his/her efforts to move toward the father and her feelings about the father are positive, the son or daughter typically feels closer to him. Conversely, when the mother disparages the father and the parents have a more distant or even alienated connection, the child often pulls away from the father. (67)

There are also evidences that a wholesome relationship between the father and the mother is paramount to the establishment of a good father-child relationship. (Abelin, 1975, Coiro, and Emery, 1988, Hwewitt, 1991, 1992, 2000; Pleck and Masciadrelli, 2004). However, this support of the mother in fostering a good father-child relationship collapses in the face of the unwholesome and inharmonious relationship between Eugene and his wife. Newton (2006) corroborates the fact that there is the need for a harmonious relationship and that unwholesome relationship between a father and mother tends to distance or alienate the child from the father.

In the formulation of Newton (2006), father presence is viewed as a psychological construct in the children and not just a set of characteristics noticeable in the father, although the two may coincide. For him, 'the relationship with the father is comprised of affective, behavioural, and cognitive/perceptual elements that we operationalize as the son's or daughter's feelings about the father, his/her physical relationship with the father, and the child's perception of the father's involvement with him/her.' (45). If we examine Eugene's relationship with his children within the framework of these operational terms, we will find out that he fails woefully as a father because his presence always evokes fear in the whole family.

Eugene's fear is a product of unhealed childhood wounds of worthlessness and inadequacies inflicted on him by the good father to burn the love of God into him. This is the reason for his violent pattern of behaviours which also has grave psychological implications for the members of his family, particularly the children whose behaviours have started revealing a psychological crack. Kambili, the narrator, offers us a glimpse into their poignant past:

When Jaja and I were younger, from elementary two until about elementary

five, he asked us to get the stick ourselves. We always chose whistling pine because the branches were malleable, not as painful as the stiffer branches from the gmelina or the avocado.... The older we got, though, the smaller the branches we brought, until papa started to go out himself to get the stick. (p. 193).

This recourse into the past has made it possible for the writer to examine the pattern of repressed behaviours by the major characters and how this has helped to structure the plot and its latent meaning. It is this pattern of behaviours that informs our argument that there is a conspiracy against the hero's father, Eugene, by members of his family, arising from the abandonment of filial piety by the hero, himself. Understandably then, it is the unhealed wounds of these characters that serve as the driving force behind their actions in the story.

It was Eugene's repressed fear- instilled in him by the 'good father' and the feeling of worthlessness- that is expressed in his fanatical Catholicism and love for Father Benedict who is seen as a stand in for the old father, a symbol for him, of purity and devotion to the things of God. This can only be the justifiable reason he sometimes regresses to the brutalization suffered in the hands of the old father in order to 'burn' into his children the love of God, a similar experience he went through in the hands of the 'good father' at St Gregory's. He says, after burning Kambili's toe with hot water,

Everything I do for you, I do for your own good.... I committed a sin against my own body once and the good father, the one I lived with while I went to St. Gregory's, came in and saw me. He asked me to boil water for tea. He poured the water in a bowl and soaked my hands in it.... The good father did that for my own good'. (p. 196).

Eugene does not see 'burning the toes' as a form of dehumanization, just as he does not see other series of dehumanization inflicted on his family because all of these inversely express his love for God. Thus, in acting in this psychopathic way, he is paradoxically trying to please God in man and man in God. It is only this that can cover up for his repressed feeling of worthlessness as witnessed in his mammoth donation to the church and his over generosity. This feeling is carried further in his quest for recognition in the church, more of a hypocritical demonstration of holiness in the presence of Father Benedict and the whole congregation. Obviously, he wants to be praised always. This is the only healing balm to his wound of worthlessness.

Closely allied to this is his perfectionist attitude. His instruction when he wants to burn Kambili's toe, reveals this perfectionist ego: 'You should strive for perfection'. (p.194). The import of this is that he is unconsciously controlled by a feeling of inadequacy. Everything he does, therefore, must not only be good but be better than those of others; he must seek the approval of others both within and outside his family. Everybody must have one good thing or the other to say about him or his factory, his children must be the best and not just the second best. After Kambili showed him the girl that came first in her class, he retorts:

Look at her.... How many heads does she have? .... The girl has one head too, she does not have two. So why did you let her come first? And why do you think I work so hard to give you and Jaja the best? You have to do something with all these privileges. Because God has given you much, he expects much from you. He expects perfection. I didn't have a father who

sent me to schools. My father spent his time worshipping gods of wood and stone. I would be nothing today but for the priest and sisters at the mission. (p. 47).

He is constantly dogged by fear-of sin, of worthlessness, and of inadequacies. The St Agnes Father assuages all these feelings in his heretical substitution of Holy trinity for Pope, Papa and Jesus. Father Benedict usually refers to Pope, Papa and Jesus- in that order. He uses Papa to illustrate the gospel. (p.4). Consciously then, he wants to please and not just the man of God, but man in general as long as they show penitence and contrite hearts in their extreme Catholicism.

Paradoxically however, these feelings of sins of worthlessness and of inadequacies are still reinforced by Father Benedict because he and, indeed, members of his family must confess their sins to him, even the most trivial of going to Pa Nnukwu, a heathen but more importantly Eugene's father, or of watching masquerade in order to avoid going to hell or spending some time in the purgatory. He remonstrates:

You understand that it is wrong to take joy in pagan rituals because it breaks the first commandment. Pagan rituals are misinformed superstitions and they are the gateway to Hell'. (p. 106).

Yet, Father Benedict is holy and perfect enough to hear these confessions. He, Eugene, to avoid sins, must therefore love his God with all 'his mind, soul and might' and since he has been included in the heretical trinity of Father Benedict, he does not see it as inappropriate to use his might to compel his family to accept the love of God. Only an inward feeling of penitence and contrition that breeds worthlessness would drive a man to such depravity- the brutalization of his family in the name of love and holiness.

His feelings of inadequacy and worthlessness are summed up in his fear of sin and since he could not direct his anger against the good father at St Gregory's who created these unwholesome emotions, it is easier to direct his anger - his madness at the vulnerable members of his family - his father, his sister, his wife and his children. What they all suffer in his hand is displaced anger. He hates Pa Nnukwu, who he calls a heathen, an unrepentant sinner and causes him to experience hell while still living by giving him paltry sum occasionally and depriving him of the love of his grand children. The old man intones when he sees his son's house, 'My son owns a house that can fit in every man in Abba and yet, many times I have nothing to put on my plate'. In spite of this, the old man does not hate him; he does not even blame him. He only bemoans the release of his son to the white man whom he rightly sees as the source of his sorrow. The old man still prays for his son like the father of the prodigal son despite his violation and abandonment of his filial piety. His only regret is that he allowed him to be taken away by the white man.

As it were, Eugene, in demonstrating his love for God, reneges on his filial piety and as it is witnessed in the story, later, because of the psychological conflict he has produced in Jaja, his son, between love and piety, Jaja, too, abandons his filial responsibility to him by aiding and abetting his mother's crime of murdering his father. Should we regard this as a law of Karma?

Jaja's defiance of his father starts gradually and eventually blossoms with his exposure to his Aunt's family where, for the first time in his life, he breathes the air of freedom of expression, of thought, of even laughter - that dissolves sorrows. Kambili also feels the

penetrating air of freedom when she says, 'I was just observing a table where you could say anything at any time to anyone, where the air was free for you to breathe as you wished'. (p.120). This air is different from the kind he used to breathe way back home - the freedom from the shackles of sins expressed through penitence and contrition and its concomitant violation of human dignity. Jaja also learns the real meaning of love and responsibility. He learns from Obiora, much younger than he is, how to love, support and defend one's siblings and one's mother in the face of persecution.

In his keen observation back home, he declares, 'Look how Obiora balances aunty'Ifeoma's family on his head and I am older than he is. I should have taken care of mama (p.209). So, he stands the gaffe to defend Kambili when his father finds the painting of Pa Nnukwu brought home from Nsukka. When the mother, out of Freudian slip, declares that she poisoned Eugene, he accepts the responsibility of the murder when he informs the police that he puts rat poison in his father's food.

At this point, it is instructive to note that some kind of oedipal complex has surreptitiously reared its head. This is manifested in the sudden awareness to take and defend, not just his sister, but also his mother. One could just say that the experience at Nsukka only ignites the rivalry for the love of his mother. Jaja competes with his father for his mother's love having learnt that it is manly to defend one's mother against the brutality of one's father and his mother too secretly relishes this by conniving with him to take his food to him in his room and on other occasions, shielding his acts of defiance away from his father. This love conflicts again with his filial piety. He is not in anyway outraged by his mother's confession that she poisoned his father. Kambili's shock and her mad rush towards her mother are immediately doused as he shoves her aside and almost immediately embraces the two of them.

Although Kambili has also drunk from the air of freedom which Jaja has found, her love for her father is not completely doused. She is stunned by her mother's confession and asks appallingly, 'why did you put it in his tea (she) asked Mama raising (Her) voice loud. (She) was almost screaming. Why in his tea. But mama did not answer. Not even when (she) stood up and shook her'.

If it were not for Jaja's intervention, her eventual reaction to her mother's murder of her father would have been one of anger and the other of vengeance. This is a girl who always wants to please her father; this is a girl who sees herself as a drossy gold passing through the fiery furnace of her father's anger to turn out better and more refined. This is a girl who always wishes she had said something to earn her father's admiration. Despite her father's so many excesses, she still dreams of him and wishes he were still alive. She 'still listened for (and) wanted to hear Papa's footsteps on the stairs'. (p.290). In her make-up dreams, she says, 'I see papa, he reaches out to hug me, I reach out too. Our body never touches before something jerks me up and I realize that I cannot control even the dreams that I have made. (p. 306).

In spite of this however, there is still a silent air of conspiracy about the death of papa (Eugene) which is absorbed by everybody. Nobody mutes the idea of murder! It had all started with Sisey and mama and then strengthened by the mutual silence between Eugene's wife and her children. Could this be excused on the ground of not wanting to wash their dirty linen in the public? Only grief drives her to public confession which ironically nobody believes again and this is abated again with the news of the impending release of her son. As for Kambili, she becomes fickle and with the passage of time, begins to see Jaja as her hero. With the news that Jaja would soon be granted a parole, she says,

I want to hold his hand, but I know he will shake it free. His eyes were too full of guilt to really see me, to see his reflection in my eyes, the reflection of my hero, the brother who tried always to protect me the best way he could. He will never think that he did enough and he will never understand that I do not think he should have done more. (305).

One would ask here: 'Why were his eyes full of guilt? What was the guilt? Evidently, it was the guilt of aiding and abetting his father's murder. Again, this air of conspiracy breathes forth from the letters from Auntie Ifeoma and her children - none of which ever makes the slightest mention of the death. Jaja's imprisonment is merely taken for granted. Nobody asks whether or not it is true that he actually poisoned his father. The crime is glossed over. Could this be to give emotional support to the family? No need to grieve a family that is already sinking in its own despair. Or could this be a vindictive reaction to Eugene's callousness to his extended family? The second assumption seems truer. Auntie Ifeoma does not hide her resentment for her brother. When Eugene's wife says her husband carries too much burden, she affirms:

Ginidi, what are you saying?... When Ifedora was alive, there were times, nwanem, when the university did not pay salaries for months. Ifedora and I had nothing eh, yet he never raised a hand to me (p.250).

Amaka, on her own, seems to recognize that Uncle Eugene has a problem - a psychological one. During another incident of miscarriage caused by Eugene, Amaka says, 'Uncle Eugene is not a bad man, really. People have problems, people make mistakes'. Obiora's response seems to be contrary to Amaka's that Eugene is not bad. As it turns out shortly afterwards, the only reason for Amaka's position is that after all, 'he paid for Papa Nnukwu's Funeral. (p.251). The point being made here is that consciously or unconsciously, every known member of Eugene's extended family nurses one ill-feeling or the other towards him.

On the part of Father Amadi, the air of conspiracy is not completely absorbed. He dilutes it with an aura of inscrutability, which compels a man to accept his fate without asking questions - perhaps to demonstrate the helplessness of man in the face of mysterious reality or an awesome power of God and/or his supremacy over all mankind. In one of his letters to Kambili, he concludes:

'He did not want me (Kambili) to seek the whys because there are some things for which we can formulate no whys, for which whys do not exist and perhaps are not necessary'. (p.303).

He, too, like others does not mention Papa or Jaja. In doing this, a kind of Christian existentialism is used to explain the traumatic experience. Eugene, himself, would have accepted this explanation in his life time as an example of loving devotion to God and an acceptance or his will.

But the fact still remains that the same woman, Eugene wife, already tamed by her super ego to accept societal values, is not restrained by her moral fibres from committing a murder. She has resisted and rejected the advice to divorce or separate for fear of societal stigma and of losing her husband to another woman. Yet, she is not restrained from embarking on a lethal action motivated by her id - an instinctive drive for self preservation. Thus, she loses her sense of morality imposed upon her by the society. She prefers to lose her husband to death

orchestrated by her, to losing him to another woman. She is like the proverbial chichidodo in Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* that hates faeces but eats maggots bred by it. She does not suffer any fear of abandonment in the eventual death of her husband. She is steeled against that fear by the presence of her child- hero to whom she now lavishes her love and from whom she gets her security against her fear. She obviously hates her husband, Eugene, more than she loves him. The children too hate him more. The extended family also hate him, even if it is unconsciously so.

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## Dilemmatic Voice from the Third Space: Hybridity and Diasporic Consciousness in M.G Vassanji's *No New Land*

*The word space can be linked to private space where one tries to assert their own identity; their physical existence. Literally, space is nothing but the surrounding space or the physical space of an individual, but in profound sense, it signifies the psychological space that one needs to pronounce their existence in a world where 'multiculturalism' and 'hybridity' are like a common everyday phenomenon. People from the borderlands or 'third space' suffer extreme existential angst and try to purge their emotions in various artistic ways, especially through candid writings that, sometimes, can be autobiographical in nature. Globalization and modernization make people move from place to place and always the immigrants are treated as outsiders in the host countries. The present paper critically analyses the traumatic experiences of the 'imagined communities' in M.G Vassanji's *No New Land* and how they live in their 'thrisanku' or third space by assimilating a new culture and identity. Further it explicates the de-territorial and alienated experiences of the Indian immigrants who migrated twice from their homeland, struggling to find their place in host countries such as Africa and Canada, portrayed through the characters Nurdin Lalani and his wife Zera.*

**Key Words:** Multiculturalism, Hybridity, Third space, Diasporic consciousness,

Exile is a dream of a glorious return. Exile is a vision of revolution: Elba, not St Helena. It is an endless paradox: looking forward by always looking back. The exile is a ball hurled high into the air. (*Satanic Verses*, 205).

Salman Rushdie in his most controversial work *Satanic Verses* opens up his heart on the idea of Migration or to a larger context the angst of being an immigrant or an exile. Every immigrants' mind wishes for a return to their homeland since they are rooted in the deep soil of the ancestral homeland or their life in the host country may not be a happy one as they wished. People may have left their homelands on various reasons, either personal or on political pressures. Whatever may be the reason, we place it under the stream 'Diaspora'. The term 'diaspora' has been derived from the Greek word 'diaspeirein' meaning 'to spread out' while 'dia' means 'apart' and 'speirein' means 'to scatter'. In a broader term it indicates the dispersion and scattering of people from the origin or from their original homeland. It is the "movement or migration of a group of people, such as those sharing a national and/or ethnic identity, away from an established or ancestral homeland" (Narayanrao, 2011). Diaspora leads the individual identity to get into contact with various other identities of various other groups and communities in the new lands. It allows people to 'compose and decompose their identities' (Bauman, 2004). Migrating from the native place to distant lands is a process that is affected by a number of forces such as political persecution, displacement due to natural calamity, or economic distress.

M.G. Vassanji, a towering literary figure of the 20<sup>th</sup> century writes about the ideas of migration and immigration that take place in the African nations like Kenya, Tanzania etc. Vassanji's Magnum opus, *No New Land* portrays the dilemmatic experiences and

predicaments of being a migrant or an exile. He himself is a migrant and, in fact, experienced the harsh realities of migration since he was born in Kenya, brought up in Tanzania and studied in the U.S before coming to Canada to settle there. The act of migration is one that profoundly changes the individual, transforming the relationship of the migrant with both his and her home country and new host country. Issues such as 'home' and 'belonging' are critical in this sense, as migrants find that their idea of 'home' becomes detached from their home country, as they are not allowed to 'belong' there anymore. However, at the same time, they definitely do not 'belong' in their host country, and this is often unfortunately manifested through prejudice or racism. According to Stuart Hall, “Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference”(p.401-402).

Diaspora leads people to utter desolation that results from 'unbelonging' or crisis of belonging. They are denied of a particular identity and hence assume multiple identities .apart from that the individual is confused between the binary oppositions of white/black, , superior/ inferior, coloniser/ colonized, dominant/ dominated, etc. Vassanji's purpose of writing about diaspora is mainly the deconstruction of the basic duality between the colonizer and the colonized, the dominant and the dominated. *No New Land* explores the different aspects of multiculturalism, which is the undeniable reality of the globalised modern world. The novel also projects the experiences of the doubly immigrated Indians who are undergoing 'International Diaspora' and depicts Canada as a 'Shangri-La for international refugees'. It opens up the social, cultural ,racial and political experiences of the immigrants in their host counties. Nurdin Lalani, the protagonist of the novel is the son of Hanji Lalani who migrated during the colonial period and settled in east Africa. After his father's death , he could not bear the responsibilities of the family with his minimum wage of a salesman job. The Lalani family in Vassanji's *No New Land* represents the transplanted and dislocated Asians.

Immigrants are always treated as' the other' in the host country and looked down as enemies who snatch away their job opportunities and other advantages. After the independence, the Africans thought Indians will be a threat to their positions and decided to separate them from Africa. They killed many people, loot their wealth and properties thereby secured Africa entirely for their own natives. Nurdin Lalani and his family including his wife Zera and children Fathima and Hanif , thus forcefully moved to another country ,Canada ; a new land for new dreams and hopes. They entered the place with the expectation of a prosperous life of material progress but finally ended up as a miserable one. They understood the fact that Canada is like any other foreign country is meant only for the inhabitants, the whites. Each and every corner of the country shows the cultural and racial discrimination to the immigrant community who is dislocated thrice-Asia to Africa to Canada. Canda became a haven for the doubly migrated people and before their arrival it imprints the idea of no new land image in the mind of the de-territorialised populace. Vassanji writes about Canada like,

Canada, someone must have whispered the word somewhere. What was Canada – a distant place most did not know where, a pink mass on the map beside the green of Greenland. Suddenly everyone was talking of Canada: Visas, medicals, interviews, “landed”. In Canada they needed plumbers, so those who did not know one end of spanner from another, schoolteachers, salesmen and bank clerks, all joined plumbing classes and began talking of

wrenches and discussing fixtures they had never seen in their lives. Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal. You got the most recent news outside mosques after prayers, when men await their women and during morning and afternoon teatimes at the A-T and other tea shops: who had left the price of the dollar, the most recent black-market-related arrests. They talked of Don Mills as if it were in Upanga. The buildings of Rosecliffe Park were known; it seemed, in intimate detail. The rich had left almost overnight following the great nationalizations. (28)

The diasporic community experiences almost existential angst since they belong to 'no where'. They are scattered to different parts of the world and are forced to assimilate to the new host culture. They are uprooted and try to purge their emotions through recalling their past joyful days in their homeland. The thought of homeland itself has become a source of energy and happiness for the culturally and emotionally dislocated people. Here Nurdin Lalani and his family try vehemently to assimilate to the Canadian culture but failed miserably. Nurdin tries his best to get a job in Canada since he is not linguistically competent and failed miserably in the pursuit of getting a job. Life in Toronto is difficult for Nurdin. While Zera gets work immediately, and the children easily adapt to Canadian culture, Nurdin himself is jobless and rootless, unable to cope with the new unfamiliar surroundings. He's also placed in the awkward position of being supported by his wife and feels that he is not respected by his children. Nurdin finds solace and escape is in spending time with the strong Indian community that has somehow managed to recreate its East African lifestyle in Toronto. The collective residence of the Asians and Africans in the suburbs of Toronto and exceptional shopping streets provide happiness for the immigrants. The Lalani's abode in Toronto, Rosecliffpark, represents a microscopic view of the Asian's macrocosm in Canada. It is a small heterogeneous community constituted by Asians migrated from Africa. . They irrespective of their different religious beliefs stick on their own values and lead a secular life.

Almost all characters in the novel are constantly haunted by the sense of identity or they search their self that straddle between tradition and modernity or between multiple cultures. Nurdin, Esmail, Rosan , Zera are all living in an 'in-between space'; a 'third space' where they experience an incessant struggle with their haunted self . 'The third space is a mode of articulation, a way of describing a productive, and not merely reflective, space that engenders new possibility' (Meredith, 1998). It is a concept put forwarded by Homi K Bhabha , elucidates the uniqueness of each individual , or context as "hybrid". In a literal sense, hybridity is a cross between two separate races, plants or cultures. A hybrid is something that is mixed, and hybridity is simply mixture. . Hybridity is a form of liminal or in-between space, where the 'cutting edge of translation and negotiation' (Bhabha 1996) occurs. The people who experience different cultures in different countries are in fact hybrid and devoid of having an identity but of multiple identities. They experience ambivalence and alienation on their pursuit of finding and fixing an identity for them. Each country has its own food, customs, beliefs, dress code and other cultural practices. The immigrants who move from one place to another occupy in a third space and are forced to accustom to this new cultural codes. They neither belong to the homeland nor to the host country. Salman Rushdie argues in his works that a migrant is somebody who has suffered greatly, and who loses a lot through their "translation." This is captured in the following quote from his work *Shame* "it is the fate of migrants to be stripped of history, to stand naked amidst the scorn of strangers

upon whom they see rich clothing, the brocades of continuity and the eyebrows of belonging” ( 29). However, because migrants are not dressed in "continuity" and "belonging," they are able to see life in a different way from anybody else, which gives them greater insight and courage to face all the troubles by creating a private space for them.

Most of the immigrants undergo the question of race and ethnicity at least once in the host country. They are segregated and sidelined by the colour of the skin and prompted to suffer all the atrocities hence their entry to the new land is viewed as an encroachment by the natives. Nurdin and his family are the living examples of the atrocities of racial discrimination. When they entered Canada people started to identify them through their skin colour. But this has broken all the limits when he accused of raping a white girl.

Instinctively he hurried towards her, parking the trolley on the way. “Madam-Miss – is anything wrong? Can I be of any help?” He tried again. “Miss, shall I call a doctor?”.... “RAPE!” she cried. “He's trying to rape me!” (179)

After this fabricated incident everyone looked him as a rapist without investigating on the matter. Every one believed her words because she is white. This made him very angry on this society where people give utmost priority to race. “I thought in this country a man was innocent until proved guilty,” said Romesh (180). Only Romesh believed him because he is the only person who belongs to Nurdin's place. Nurdin is suspended from his work, finally his own family and community started to looking him doubtfully.

Then Hanif had asked, “Did you?” and Zera had asked, “Did you?” “Weren't you tempted?” Zera asked. (184)

The past memories give great happiness and refuge to the immigrants to a greater level. Immersed in nostalgic memories of the ancestral homeland is a source of relief for them. It is a kind 'purgation', purging their frustration and anxiety by looking back to the joyful days. Nurdin Lalani and almost all the other immigrants get happiness from their memories and love the company of the same community in the host country. Nurdin is energized when he sat in the armchair and looking at CN tower's blinking light in open window of Sixty nine of Rosecliffe park and remembering about his past life. “The CN Tower blinked constantly in the darkness. At times like these, all to himself, he would on occasion think of the old days.... Of his stern old father who had terrified him so much.. of his brother and sisters and the family... of his schooldays... of his buddy, Charles, and the days and nights they spent in the forest together on their way to sell Bata shoes.”...(169). These memories are not just a past time, but are the foundations upon which they constructed their life and identity, and stand as a motivation for the life ahead. Stuart Hall in his essay *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* illustrates,

Cultural identity is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'. It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere, have histories. But like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power. Far from being grounded in mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which when found, will secure our sense of

ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past. (394)

M.G Vassanji , to a greater extent, has succeeded in projecting the magnitude of suffering and identity crisis experienced by the immigrant populace in their 'new lands' of dreams and hopes. The feeling of marginality and alienation makes them dilemmatic and their voice is unheard in the society. Their mind yearns for a return to their homeland even though it is not that much possible, as Nurdin remarks “ Zera why step foot into a world which we do not belong”( 148).In fact *No New Land* is a tale of the marginalised and also it is a tale from the 'liminal' or ' in-between spaces', where they try to assert their individuality.

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## Spatiality of Silence and Incarceration in *The Metamorphosis*

“There is a politics of space because space is political” (Lefebvre 59)

Metamorphosed into a horrible vermin, the space of a human soul is getting ensnared and entrapped inside the four walls of the room without any movement inside and outside with silence as the only companion and thus Gregor Samsa feels suffocated in his own space. That physical setting was so familiar to him, which now turned out to be a prison without anyone to speak and hang around. In that confined space he is in a struggle to adjust to his new condition as he struggles being burdensome to his parents and sister, who is repulsed by the horrible, verminous creature Gregor has become.

Henri Lefebvre, French Marxist philosopher and sociologist argued that 'space' is a mental and material construct. Socially produced and socially lived space depends on physical and mental constructs. Space is viewed in three ways, as perceived, conceived and lived. At first it takes the physical form; a space that is generated and is used. And in this context Gregor's room can be taken as the real physical setting. The second space represents a mental construct or the imagined space where Gregor contemplates over his life and dreams. The third space involves both the real and the imagined and that is the lived space. This is where Gregor live his new life of an alienated soul.

Kafka wrote about a Yiddish play *The Savage One* by Gordin in his diaries and this might be a model for him to write *The Metamorphosis*. The Savage one, Gregor's counterpart in the play, is an idiot son who is unable to communicate with his family and stays locked in his room as he is afraid of his father. The metamorphosed Gregor too finds his space inside that small room in their house, being ignored and loved by his father. Kafka's father too appeared as a gigantic, brash and authoritative one to him. Like Gregor Samsa, Kafka himself experienced as an insect in his hands. In need of money Kafka sets out to work and earn much as Gregor in the story, with no rest at all and in this disillusionment, he found refuge in her sister Ottla who later betrays him. Grete, Gregor's sister too undergoes similar change in behavior and she shouts "I no longer want to call this monster my brother" ( Kafka 89). Grete who really cared for Gregor even after the transformation later turns against him and says,

You've got to get rid of the idea that that's Gregor. We've only harmed ourselves by believing it for so long. How can that be Gregor? If it were Gregor he would have seen long ago that it's not possible for human beings to live with an animal like that and he would have gone of his own free will ... And it is this animal persecuting us, it's driven out our tenants, it obviously wants to take over the whole flat and force us to sleep on the streets (91)

The room, its bed, the affiliated objects and activities are all components of one's private sphere. When the normal setting and pattern is disrupted, the disturbance extends to the surrounding space too. The metamorphosis not only alters his physical being but also

reduced his space and movement. The family confined Gregor to his room which spatially restricts the world for Gregor. He transformed from a travelling salesman to a horrible, filthy and gigantic insect. Once he was trying to get out of the bed and his legs were struggling against each other and seems harder than before and he could think of no way of bringing peace and order to this chaos. When the clerk comes to call him he says, " You barricade yourself in your room, give us no more than yes or no for an answer" (30). And his father informs him that the clerk has come to meet him and says " I'm sure he'll be good enough to forgive the untidiness of your room" (28). His father's authoritative voice and presumptions about his son is clear by this.

Gregor's spatial and emotional deterioration is architecturally represented through the projection of Gregor's expulsion, alienation and estrangement into spatial elements and objects. The interior is transformed into a space of psychological anxiety, spelling out the protagonist's alienation in a language of doors, ceilings, windows and furniture. In his new state of being a bug, the ceiling appears higher and the space above more vacant. The empty room communicates him the hymn of isolation. Lefebvre argues that space is the ultimate medium of struggle in both private and public space. Gregor's struggles were to himself in this private space with no exposure to the outer sphere. Gregor's move under the couch indicates his anxiety and fear that engulfed him inside that room. Gregor is not being terrified by everything now, but by the dimensions of his room; a space where he has been living for the past five years. Gregor's incarceration in his room is depicted through the implicit representation of the apartment as prison. He is being alienated in his own room. The only connection that he maintained with the outside world is through the vision he captures through the window in which he observes the outer space which is free and open.

Gregor's room is then filled with all the garbage and useless furniture. His room was not something which was meant for this, but an apt place for humans to live. " His room, a proper human room although a little too small, lay peacefully between its four familiar walls"(17). After his transformation into that creature the furniture is removed for him to crawl and move freely.

They were emptying his room out; taking away everything that was dear to him; they had already taken out the chest containing his fretsaw and other tools; now they threatened to remove the writing desk with its place clearly worn into the floor, the desk where he had done his homework as a business trainee, a high school even while he had been at infant school (63)

From his mother's words it is clear that this empty room even intensifies the loneliness and abandonment that he has to suffer. "By taking the furniture away, won't it seem like we're showing that we've given up all hope of improvement and we're abandoning him to cope for him?" (62). Then he wishes not to get his room emptied and thus with his body he somehow managed to hide a picture- of the lady dressed in copious fur- which was hung there on the wall. The sight of the bare walls might sadden his thoughts. Gregor has been used to this furniture in his room for a long time and it would make him feel abandoned to be in an empty room like that. Only confusion and chaos added to his monotonous life. After removing all those stuffs, they started to dump all the garbages to that room and they made it into a large store house for all the useless things. They were putting things into his room as they had no room anywhere else since one of the rooms in the flat had been rented out to three gentlemen. As they bought most of their own furnishings with them and all those things found their way

into Gregor's room. The dustbins from kitchen too found its way there. Now, not just his room, but even his body is covered with dust.

At first he moved it because, with no other room free where he could crawl about, he was forced to, but later on he came to enjoy it although moving about in that, the way left him sad and tired to death and he would remain immobile for ours afterwards (81)

For Gregor his last years were spent inside this room alone and thus confined with no hope to move outside and no way to get freedom. " No-one dared to remove the apple lodged on his flesh, so it remained there as a visible reminder of his injury" (72). He suffered it for more than one month and because of this injury he had lost much of his mobility. During some evenings the door to the living room remained open and he got into the habit of watching it for one or two hours before it would close. " Lying in the darkness of his room, he could watch the family in the light of the dinner table and listen to their conversation- with everyone's permission, in a way and thus quite differently from before" (73). Gregor's room is analogous to his state of being in a kind of claustrophobic setting. Gregor perceives his room as a ' lofty empty place' that fills him ' with an apprehension he could not account for'.

At the beginning of the novella, the room is described as ' four familiar falls' and familiarity implies a sense of belonging and freedom. As his body is transformed, his room too has got a transformation from a living to an emptied one and then to a place for garbage. For about two months the life of a travelling sales man is entrapped in those four walls. Being injured and unable to move he spends his days in darkness watching his family. " Pushing a chair to the window, climbing up onto the sill, and propped up in the chair, leaning on the window to stare out of it. He had used to feel a great sense of freedom from doing this" (56). He always wished to feel the family and listen to their talks and when he won't be able to hear properly what is heard from the next rooms, he would move to the appropriate door and press his whole body against it to listen well.

Gregor's room transforms from a working man's resting place to a jail, and later to an insect den and then finally to a tomb. Three times he tried to get out of the room and all these attempts resulted in his pathetic end. Only death could liberate his body from that room and his soul from that burdensome body. Gregor experiences a claustrophobic anxiety of being cut off and segregated as he is clearly trapped in the room and is silenced forever. Here, the haunting claustrophobic anxiety is shown in the literal meaning of ' room' and space. Room or a domestic space is often explored with political meanings as an instrument of power and ideology. His voice too has changed to an animal voice and thus was silenced in that limited space. His room in which he lived after his transformation appeared as prison cells, which were sinister and suffocating and was put under a panopticon kind of surveillance and control. " For some reason, the tall, empty room where he was forced to remain made him feel uneasy as he lay there flat on the floor, even though he had been living in it for five years" (47).

Since the spatial turn, space is no longer perceived as an inert or static background, but has close connection and emotional association with the lives. It is an embodiment of living experiences and values. According to Michel Foucault's *Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias* all cultures are heterotopias and it refers to spaces and places under non-hegemonic conditions. A room is also a heterotopia which is connected to a person's lived experiences and thoughts. In 1967, Michel Foucault declared that we are in an epoch of space.

We do not live in a kind of void that could be coloured with diverse shades of light, we live inside a set of relations that delinates sites which are irreducible to one another and absolutely not superimposable on one another (Foucault 3)

Space and spatiality became more prominent in social, cultural and literary criticism in the late 50 years. There is a politics of space as space is political. This is because it mirrors the actual uses and experiences of space. Every society produces a space; its own space. For Gregor, his room transforms from a mere physical setting constituting four walls to a realm of his lived experiences. His fear, claustrophobic anxiety, estrangement and alienation occupy this 'Third Space' in Edward Soja's terminology. Space has made a timely reemergence in literary and cultural studies now with the influence of post modernism and Foucault too suggested that a new epoch of space is emerging in this century.

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## In Search of Occidental Space in Hollywood Films to Overcome Xenophobia

“Men often hate each other because they fear each other, they fear each other because they don't know each other, they do not know each other because they cannot communicate, they cannot communicate because they are separated”.

-Martin Luther King

The term xenophobia originates from the Greek terms 'xenos' (meaning strange or foreigner) and 'phobos' (meaning fear). Hence it can be defined as being contemptuous of that which is foreign, especially of people belonging to entirely different backgrounds, by knitting cultural, political, racial and religious prejudiced stereotypes which is fantasized and exotic. It can manifest itself in many ways: as a perceived threat of losing identity of the 'ingroup' due to the emergence of an autonomous 'Other' to submerge their imagined superiority, suspicion of its activities and as attempts to eliminate its presence to secure the power structure from being transmitted.

To establish a clear cut western hegemonic ideology, Europeans have been manipulating the representation of the 'Other'. This misrepresentation and racist overtones have been an agency to hide the fears and the anxieties within the minds of Occidents towards the Orient. It can be observed that there has been a paradigmatic shift in the definition of the Other. European expansionism was not motivated by any spiritual philosophy or materialistic dogma, the phobia can be treated back to the periods of crusades.

Later from nineteenth to mid twentieth century, the bipolar world system- the US and USSR- dominated during the Cold War period. When Russia picked up the image as super power in the global scale, it became a necessity for United States to represent them as equally powerful to maintain their identity and to assure their existence. Hence they began to create their own fictional world and characters. They used media to propagate many pseudo identities, to reduce the anxieties of the western society, and inculcate a sense of dominance to the outer world. From then on, it can be observed that there was a rigorous attempt to establish a unipolar world with US in the center.

Hollywood media is a driving force to overt and covert attitudes that shape, and are shaped by the world. Films are drawn from current fears. It offers a form of escapism from the politics of the age and reassures the public that their future was in good, gentlemanly hands and that Good (West) would always win in the end. The best means adopted by them to sustain and illuminate their identity is through films which has an international reach.

This kind of escapist approach can be traced in the beginning of twentieth century, in films like *Birth of Nation* (1916), which had led to the Klu Klux Klan recruitment, is regarded as the milestone in the history of Hollywood films. Such conflicts are also depicted in later films like *First Blood* (1982), *Pearl Harbour* (2001), *Killing Field* (1984) and so on. It can

also be filtered from the Hollywood productions belonging to James Bond series, especially the earlier ones like *Dr No* (1962), *Thunder Balls* (1965) and *The Spy who Loved Me* (1977).

After the dissolution of Russia, media in the West began to construct a new foe. A phobia began to take its shape towards the 'mysterious East' after the decolonization of the Third World. Rather than giving a space for the present generation to interact with the different indigenous cultures of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino, Vietnamese, Africans, Indians and Arabs, they all are simplified into a monolithic identity, which are subordinate and ahistorical, stamped with the images of underdevelopment and backwardness. Hence East began to be represented as primitive, barbaric and rebellious. Their culture is associated often in an aggressive manner. These are used as yardsticks to measure how different is the 'Civilized West' is from the Orient with some degree of xenophobia. The West took up the role of a redeemer who is meant to conquer and tame the Eastern wilderness. In the poem *The White Man's Burden* Rudyard Kipling states:

“Take up the White man's burden,  
Send forth the best ye breed,  
Go bind your sons to exile,  
To serve your captives need;  
To wait in heavy harness,  
On fluttered folk and wild  
Your new-caught, sullen people,  
Half-devil and half-child.”

In the above lines, Kipling picturises Orient as half devils. The poem reveals the ambitious imperialist endeavors of the west, suggesting that the white, civilised race had a duty to go into the dark places of the world, conquer their people and teach them morality, culture and economic systems of the West while denigrating their own history and tradition.

Edward Said confirms in his masterpiece, *Orientalism* that this 'ism' is a European invention, deliberately adopted by the British and French in the early nineteenth century to formulate perspectives and define power. Orientalism as a discourse of power, perpetuated the dominance of the west over the non west. It was a means to justify imperialism. Said presented orientalism as a multifaceted discourse, a 'textual relation' focusing on the characterisation of Orient according to various dogmas.

Firstly, by creating a systematic difference that distinguished the civilised West from the backward East by comically portraying them as villains, cowardly and barbaric. Later they were portrayed as immoral and people who lacked honour. They are regarded as primitives, womanisers and dangerous people that need, and will continue to need American assistance as represented in films like *Three Kings* ( 1999 ) in which American army protects Iraqi civilians.

The second dogma put forward by Said is that Orientalism tends to generalise the western perception of the orient and purposefully ignores the diversities between the Eastern countries. For example, in the films like *Octopussy* ( 1983 ), a film belonging to James Bond series and *Around The World in Eighty Days* ( 2004 ) an action thriller by Jackie Chan depicts countries like India as a land of snake charmers and black magicians; China as primitives, irrational and completely driven by spirituality; and finally the Arabs or Middle Eastern as 'bearded mullahs, billionaire Sheikhs, terrorist bombers, heartless dictators, womanizers and noisy bargainers. Woman surface either as belly dancers bouncing voluptuously in palaces or are portrayed as beings who are erotically oscillated in slave markets'. More recently, image makers are offering other caricatures of Muslim women covered in black burqa by

portraying them as uneducated, unattractive voiceless and enslaved beings.

It can be observed that the world history books are authored from the perspective of an Occident. They reduce history to a farce, neglects change and present the past with alterations to provide space for establishing western hegemony. Cinema has been the dominant medium of mass popular culture of twentieth century which provided space for such misrepresentations to induce a resistance, strong antipathy and aversion towards the Orient in the psyche of viewers. Such misrepresentations were mixed up with myths and heritage to reduce their cult feelings as inferior to that of Western culture.

It can also be observed that the Capitalist influences on the media has also forced the directors to compete in what they show, battling back and forth giving the viewer what they want to see. This battle can create exaggeration and sensationalism. Hollywood films depict Orient in a specifically constructed stereotypical way to fulfill the subconscious of the viewer who had internalised them as foes. Through these representations, it is easy to unveil the western attitude that remains stagnant in the case of 'Othering'. As ages pass, Hollywood tries to enforce the perception regarding 'Other' upon the Orient to distinguish the nature and culture with respect to that of theirs. This stagnant nature of western perception can be traced when we closely examine the films, *The King and I* screened in 1956 and the contemporary parody film *The Dictator* screened in 2012.

The musical film *The King and I* by Walter Lang traces life of the determined King Mongkut (Yul Brynner) of Siam and the strong willed widowed school teacher Anna Leonowens (Deborra Kerr). This film unveils the internal conflict within the Orient itself regarding their identity as primitive. They have a tendency to follow the West, and the Occidents take it as a chance to civilize or tame the East.

The film begins by pointing fingers at the phobia within the heart of Occidents through the perspective of Mrs. Anna's son Louis, who tells of his fear of the half naked minister Kralaham approaching them. Mrs. Anna as an elder, tells him to "Whistle a Happy Tune" to shut off the fear within him. Whistling or pretending to be fearless is a means to disguise them. It is a strategy taken up to hide their phobia of Orient. The West regard East as barbarians who have to be civilized. The King wishes to change this identity. The first step taken up by the king is to educate the royal children English language. Mrs. Anna is portrayed as the courageous woman who readily accepts to bear the White man's burden.

The first step introduced by the West to civilise East was to remove the multitudinous by imposing a single language, English and discard the diverse indigenous culture. Language is the best means to construct or impose a culture into the youth. This was the first successful attempt taken up by the Occidents to rule Orient. Even the behaviors, gestures, speech used for salutation or any other mannerisms have its own cultural connotations. Hence a civilised manner of salutation, the western fashion, dance and culture was imposed upon Siamese children and women as part of training them. This can be seen in one among the scenes, where King orders Anna to "guess" what he would have done to impress the Western officials who are planning to visit and assess the so called barbarians. Anna and the king plans to welcome them completely in a western fashion. In this instance the king states,

King : You will order the finest chopsticks.

Anna : Your Majesty, chopsticks? Don't you think knives and forks would be more suitable?

King : I make mistake, the British not scientific enough to know how to use chopsticks. Why not spoons?

Anna : And cigars too.

The film also sketches King's dilemma in choosing the rational or spiritual. The king contemplates how he craves for truth and wonders why the world has become so complicated with different cultures saying different things - "A Puzzlement".

Secondly, the depiction of his stand taken regarding women and their freedom, and the ancient patriarchal customs that are to be followed is note worthy. It implies men of East as womanisers and male chauvinists. This is suggested in dialogues between Anna and the king:

King : So many English books say strange idea of love. et cetra et cetra et cetra.

Anna : And you disapprove?

King : Ofcourse. A woman is designed for busy man. A man is designed to be pleased by many women.

Anna : Why not many men being faithful to one wife? But you expect many wives to be faithful to one man?

King : Naturally. A girl must be like a blossom. But honey to just one man. A man must live like a honeybee and gather honey by flying from blossom to blossom. A honeybee must be free but blossom must not ever fly bee to bee to bee.

The king also assured that women's heads are not raised higher than that of his and he strictly defined the conducts that have to be followed by male and female, which are passed on to them through the patriarchal ancestors.. The film even sarcastically takes up an issue regarding the Civil War led by Abraham Lincoln and the king tells Anna to write a letter to Lincoln in which it is stated, "... pairs of male elephants to be released into the forests of America. There it is hoped that they will grow in number and the people can tame them and use them as beasts of burden." At this comment Anna comments, " But your Majesty, I don't think you mean pairs of MALE elephants." These scenes picturises Orients as irrational and senseless chauvinists.

Children are depicted as blind frogs in the pond that have no knowledge of the outside world. They, including the king are portrayed as stubborn who refuse to accept the facts. The women too are shown as primitives who get excited or frightened to see anything new from the outer world. In an instance when the General from Britain comes to visit them, they get frightened by the monocle and cover their faces by lifting the gown and flee off. Walter Lang portrays them as though they are not aware of the sense of modesty followed by the civilised.

It is pathetic to notice that the representation has worsened after the advent of Islamophobia into western psyche which arouse as post traumatic stress disorder after witnessing the 9/11 terrorist attack. Islamophobia gave Muslims a political rather than cultural or religious identity and reinforced the existing stereotypes. The film *The Dictator* directed by Larry Charles and starring Sacha Baron Cohen had reached the silver screen after half a decade. This film released in 2012, set in the fictional land Wadiya, is again a scathing satire on the Muslims and Arab rulers. The character Admiral General Haffaz Aladeen is

stigmatised as a hedonistic, tyrannical and sexually aggressive, anti western, anti Jewish and on the other hand as a childish or senseless decision maker. His language and slang is similar to that of Arabs, though he does not accept himself to be an Arab. In fact, the term Arab is perceived by Occidents as a synonym to a Muslim with a monolithic culture. The voids in representation of Arabs by themselves in front of the world, paved way for the West to affirm the stereotypical images. The term 'Arab' itself cannot be defined as a homogeneous culture. It refers to twenty two countries (nations in the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa) in which Arabic is spoken and share diverse history and culture. It is important to clarify that the term 'Arab' does not refer to a specific religion either. Arab and Muslim are not synonymous or interchangeable. Though a large portion of Arabs are Muslims, there are predominant Christian, Jewish and other religious communities in the Arab world as well.

In the film, General Aladdin is portrayed as a clone of former Libyan dictator Muammar al Gaddafi and protector of Osama Bin Ladhén. This dictator who is a fascist and misogynist North African despot visits New York to give a speech at the UN but is kidnapped and his identity is stripped off, especially his precious beard, and is left to wander through the city until he is rescued by a grocery manager, enacted by Anna Faris. As in the case of Mrs. Anna in *The King and I*, in this movie Anna Faris through the role as Zoey takes up the duty to tame the barbaric dictator.

In this film too Orients are vilified as ruthless fundamentalists and dictators who fight for power to rule the world. In a speech, Aladeen expresses his view on dictatorship,

General Aladeen : Why are you guys so anti dictators? Imagine if America was a dictatorship. You could let one percentage of people have all the nations wealth. You could help your rich friends get richer by cutting their taxes. And bailing them out when they gamble and lose. You could ignore the needs of the poor for the healthcare and education. Your media would appear free but would secretly be controlled by one person and his family. You could wiretap phones. You could torture foreign prisoners. You could have rigged elections. You could lie about why you go to war. You could fill your prisons with one particular racial group, and no one would complain. You could use the media to scare the people into supporting policies that are against their interests.

Such trials to misrepresent dictators unknowingly reveal the policies adopted by the Occidents themselves to the rest of the world. In the contemporary period we can observe many Arabian nations under the rule of kings, developing faster by accompanying prosperity of the citizens when compared to that of democratic nations. Hence it is clear that such representations emerge out of a fear that arises in the mind of Occidents when they recognize Orients entering the mold of 'Super Powers'.

The Occidents still have the tendency to catch hold of the old superstitions and customs which no more exist. It is done for the stereotypical notion of East to prevail in the mind of new generation. General Aladdin is guarded by Amazonian women bodyguards. He is portrayed as androcentric who uses women as robots or machines with bulged body to fulfill his carnal desires. Zoey as a tamer, teaches this animal how to masturbate. Finally Zoey marries the tamed animal "Aladeen". The final statement of Aladeen is noteworthy, he asks pregnant Zoey, "a boy or abortion". The age old custom of female feticide is still stamped on the identity of Orients. Aladdin orders his wife to be executed as she is Jewish. This is a

means to condemn Islam as intolerant and anti Semitic in nature.

The prejudiced feelings towards Orientals are ignited by juxtaposing Islamophobia into the viewers mind. In *The Dictator*, Aladeen and his former nuclear scientist take a helicopter tour to scout out the hotel that the UN meeting will take place at. They board the helicopter with two Americans and greet them in English. Then General Aladeen and the scientist talk about the sights to see in their own language. They talk about the fireworks, the statue of the liberty, the empire state building and so on. A reference to New Year urges them to countdown, which in turn makes the Americans scream for their life. This points to the islamophobic stereotype of terrorism and also alludes to September 11th Attack which led to multiply the prejudice towards American and foreign Muslims. Political scientist and anthropologist Mahmood Mamdani's insights regarding politicising Islam provides evidence for the cause of xenophobia in the present generation and the reason for taking up such a political stance by Europe. Mamdani argues that politicizing notions of Islam by differentiating between Good and Bad Muslim, misrepresents the apolitical character of the religion. It is utilized as a chance to scrutinise Orient's morality and also dangerously ignores the Cold War Era American complexity in the veil of 9/11 Attack. Mamdani states in his seminal text *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, Cold War and the Roots of Terror*,

Few would fail to notice the growing common ground between the perpetrators of 9/11 and the official response to it called 'The War on Terror'. Both sides deny the possibility of a middle ground, calling for a war to finish. Both rally forces in the name of justice but understand justice as revenge. If the perpetrators of 9/11 refuse to distinguish between official America and the American people, target and victim, "the war on terror" has proceeded by dishing out collective punishment, with callous disregard for either 'collateral damage' or legitimate grievances.

To find an occidental space in the world, the West with the accompaniment of corporations based in the defense or entertainment industry, reinforced the tendency to treat media as 'marketable entertainment'. When the two films are viewed as 'marketable media', it is biting to notice that both comedies derive from British actors as effigy of Oriental or Arab stereotype. Stigmatizing the East as dangerous or frightening can be traced even in the Elizabethan Age through Shakespeare's plays like Othello. In the nineteenth century, Saartji Baartman, a South African American lady from Cape Town was brought to England as slave. Her physical deformity subjected herself as an animal kept in the zoo to be watched at. She was displayed under the name "Hottentot Venus". Later in the 21st century we witnessed the attempts of Danish cartoonist who portrayed Prophet Mohammed as womaniser. We can also observe that such kinds of strategies are taken up even by the video game designers who portray villains as Orientals (blacks, browns, and yellow skinned people).

All these are results of phobias present within the Occidental society. The lack of spiritual or cultural past for the Occidents is also one among the many reasons mentioned above. The Occidents are fascinated by the mystique and admires the mysteriousness and spirituality of the Orientals. They try to imitate and practice martial arts, Zen Buddhism, Buddhism and Islam. Even the success of Hare Rama Hare Krishna Movement can be seen as a result of this void present within the Occidental space. In film industry, after the release of BruceLi's movies, especially the film *Enter the Dragon* (1973), Occidents phobia towards the Orientals increased as they analysed the supremacy of East regarding the man power, will power and

their own well defined indigenous culture. Hence such misrepresentations are a means to veil their phobias. Such fears will not end unless this compartmentalized space which has penetrated into the Occident's mind is removed.

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## From Village to City: Mapping Dalit Assertion

### Abstract

*Dalit texts, autobiography and fiction, record spatialization of marginality. Dalits inhabit spaces imbued with caste power. Such caste spaces produce and reinforce socio-economic inequalities alongside causing physical, emotional and mental trauma for Dalits. Dialectically, these spaces are those from within which Dalits stage their acts of negotiation and resistance in the era of Dalit assertion.*

*In this paper, I propose to analyse the link between space, caste power and Dalit lived experience with the help of three Dalit texts: Karukku, Joothan and Untouchable Spring. In this process I would also analyse how various apparatuses of modernity and democratic nation state get implicated in caste oppression and resistance.*

Space, both physical and metaphorical, is crucial to Dalit studies. It is hardly an innocent formation. Particularly in Dalit texts it is revealed to be invested with caste power. The mythopoetic narration of the origins of caste societies and the way it is experienced today seem to make the beginnings of caste relations coterminous with the organization of physical space. Power is located in caste and caste based space demarcation. What we encounter in Dalit texts is the way space-power combine influences the Dalit performatives and controls the socio-economic interactions among Dalits and upper castes. "Space, here meaning social space, is no the empty container of Cartesian or Kantian thought, but a social product made possible by human effort (Robert Tally 117).

It is also imperative to note that in the context of era of Dalit assertion, physical spaces imbued with caste power, are rendered dialectical. The birth of modern Dalit subjectivity seems to happen within these spaces. It is either the centripetal or centrifugal movement from the originary space that the Dalit subject is able to reimagine his/her identity. The traumatized yet assertive Dalit self is birthed in relationality of space and power. By analyzing *Karukku*, *Joothan* and *Untouchable Spring* and their engagement with space, I will attempt to study the polyvalence of space in these texts.

Dalit autobiography and fiction portray spatialization of villages which extends into cities. In the villages it is explicit and in the cities it is displayed subtly. While in the villages the allocation is socio-economic, in cities it is the social status, the mentality of caste space that denies Dalits space among upper castes. Both entail a politicality that creates an interesting dialectic. The lower caste response of negotiation and challenge to such an allocation makes this study of space an essential aspect in Dalit literature.

All the three texts- *Karukku*, *Joothan* and *Untouchable Spring*- represent spatialization of villages along caste axis. Different caste groups are apportioned a region. Transgression of Dalits into the upper caste spaces without conforming to the caste rules would invite harsh corporeal punishment in the public domain. This forces a kind of Dalit performative that in turn reinforces social inequality between the dominant and dominated castes. The space thus organized is constitutive of Dalit's identity. As Dalits move from their locality to public

spaces such as the school or office, stigmatization and negative stereotyping of Dalit quarter, continues to follow them, producing a traumatized self.

*Karukku*, for instance, begins with the description of the map of Bama's village. It is neatly divided into upper caste streets and lower caste and Dalit streets. Even among the Dalit groups the hierarchy is clinched by placing the lowest ranked community far away from the village center, which is in the upper caste region. In her mapping of the village, upper caste sections resemble a metropolis. The amenities such as school and hospital are located there. She writes: I don't know how it came about that the upper caste communities and lower caste communities were separated like this into different parts of the village. But they keep themselves to their part of the village, and we stayed in ours. We only went to their side if we had work to do there. But they never, ever came to our parts. The post office, the panchayat Board, the milk shop, the big shops, the church, the schools – all these stood in their streets. So why would they need to come to our area? Besides, there was a big school in the Naicker street which was meant only for the upper caste children” (7). This arrangement puts the Dalits in the constant gaze of upper castes. They are watched for any aberration in the expected Dalit behavior. Here space gets imbued with caste power.

'Cheri' is the ghettoized space assigned to Dalits in villages and also in cities. Negative attributes are associated with it. Bama, in *Karukku* recalls an incident. When she is in the seventh class, the children from cheri play the game of touching the coconut on the coconut palm. They run on the slanting trunk to reach the coconuts. When it is Bama's turn to do so, one of the coconuts, loosened up from its grip, dislodges. The next day, in school she is blamed for plucking the coconut. Later, she is not permitted to enter the school. When she meets a priest to procure a letter of recommendation to the school Headmaster, he remarks “after all, you are from the cheri. You might have done it. You must have done it” (19). The branding of Bama is a consequence of her cheri origin. Not only the individual concerned here stands accused and negatively differentiated but the entire community. The cheri becomes a burden to Bama. It enters a democratic modern space of school along with her, producing both an identity and a trauma.

Incidentally, Bama uses that space to reverse the stereotype. She stands first in the class and gains friends despite her being a 'parachi.' Her brother insists that the only way out of caste prejudice is education. To the extent that discrimination and emotional and physical violence takes place in the public space, acts of Dalit resistance and assertion also take place there.

The problem of caste is also the problem of space. Spatialization of the village topography entails economic conditions as well. In a vastly agrarian set up, possession of agricultural land means monopoly of resources. Lefebvre argues that space is not merely a 'social relationship' but that “which is inherent to property relationship (especially the ownership of the earth, of land) and also closely bound up with the forces of production (which impose a form on that earth or land)” (qtd. in *Spatiality* 117). It follows then the denial of agricultural land to Dalits, despite various provisions for it, both in the traditional records and also in modern day constitution, is in fact denying them their livelihood. It becomes a tool of control; a means to keep Dalits eternally dependent on upper caste benevolence. It also means that the service castes, particularly the Dalits, are available to render services. As a result, the landowning upper castes are dialectically dependent on the Dalits for the knowledge of the land and agricultural methods, they possess. It maintains the “landlessness

and economic deprivation of Dalits” (Satyanarayana and Tharu 15). Susie Tharu and K. Satyanarayana, in their introduction to *No Alphabet in sight* advance the idea that “the story of reforms all over India is the same. Dalits did not receive any productive agricultural land; they were not even allowed to hold on to rocky or dry areas which they did receive” (35). The issue of land ownership has been central to Dalit politics and resistance. The knowledge economy of Dalits in relation to the land, seasons of the year are used to increase the profit of the land owning upper castes.

The mythopoetic origins of caste society narrated in *Untouchable Spring* further tell us the way villages are demarcated along caste lines. Malas and Madigas are forced to occupy low lying areas that the malapalli and madigapalli are always on the “threshold of danger in Yennela Dinni.” Though there is a mound unoccupied by the upper castes in Yennela Dinni, the Dalits cannot inhabit the place. The superior/inferior, high/low, master/slave binary in relationality of space is both attributed and adduced through this division. “The upper castes would not tolerate the untouchables living on a higher plane. They would say that the Malas and Madigas ought always to live in the lower regions. If they lived on the higher plane, the arrogance of the upper castes would not tolerate it. That was why the desire of the Malas and Madigas remained just that...a desire” (30). The desire for a better space and not having it elicits response in two ways – resistance or surrender. The caste hierarchy is established in a visual-spatial sense. Dalits are not just inferior, in the minds of the upper castes but their inferiority is and must be constantly seen and thus reinforced. The visual sense becomes mandatory for discriminatory practices and also to wield control.

Malas and Madigas in the novel come together in solidarity although with trepidation to enter the forbidden space. They occupy the mound in an attempt to save their lives from flood water that has engulfed their region. And later they walk through the upper caste streets, this time unnoticed. At this point, this may be read as nascent resistance to the very conception of space inimical to Dalit life. But, the psycho-physical trauma exercised on the Dalit self becomes a permanent aspect. When we consider these episodes from the Dalit texts, it becomes clear that there is a link between space, power and trauma.

In *Joothan*, we see a similar situation. Om Prakash Valmiki during a class dares to interrupt and challenge the lesson about Dronacharya. While the entire class reacts to the story of Dronacharya giving flour mixed water receives, with an emotional response, Valmiki raises questions about the logic of the poverty of Dalits. He also vehemently points out that not even an epic has been written about Dalits. The master screams that Kaliyug has 'descended upon [them] because an untouchable has 'dared to talk back'. Forcing Valmiki to sit in the murga or rooster position the master writes an epic on his back, that is, he beats Valmiki's back with a stick. The public confrontation by the young Valmiki of centuries old history and the eulogizing of it without being sensitive to the Dalit reality is an act of resistance.

The school room, in this episode, is a public space where the physical force of caste power is seen. It also promises progress and escape from clutches of caste for Dalits. It stands for dissemination of knowledge equally to pupils of groups. The mentality of caste found in the school master converts this modern democratic space into a caste space. The bodily space of the recalcitrant Dalit subject becomes the slate on which the history of caste oppression continues to be inscribed. Significantly, Valmiki's reaction to the Indian myth-history seeks valiantly to rewrite that history – a history of meek surrender and sometimes a willing

participation in their own subjugation. This experience produces a 'dark vault in his life.' He "struggles for years on end to come out"(132) of it. Earlier Valmiki narrates how his traditional role in caste society is reinforced when he is forced sweep the ground. His father's extraordinary courage and wrath at this discriminatory practice ensures that he continues his education.

Space in Foucault's argument is not something that can be treated as "the dead, the fixed, the undialectical, the immobile" (qtd. *Spatiality*, 119) but it is rather an entity vibrant with the possibilities of change and negotiation. Lefebvre suggests that space produces 'us'. In other words it plays a constructive role in identity formation. In the Dalit context, space is etched with memory, trauma, and desire for positive transformation of their lives and those of the upper castes.

In this connection, it is important to consider Bama's trajectory from her village to the church and back to her village. Initially immersed in the casteist space, she embraces life of a nun with a strong belief that church is without caste and it promotes equality. To her dismay and disappointment, she finds caste ubiquitous and it seems to fill all the domains of social interaction even that of the Church. Her progress from village to city is a movement from innocence to maturity. The supposed cosmopolitan nature of city life is not devoid of caste or money or power. Finally she leaves the convent "with all its comforts and conveniences. In any case "that was for [her] a counterfeit existence. Always, all the time, [she] had to assume a false position in front of others" (120). Within the ecclesiastical domain of the church, she realizes for the first time that life in the Order is different from the one she has expected it to be. In fact, she feels a sense of revulsion and an incapacitation which similar to the one back in the village. She feels "a kind of shame.. as if [she has] gone into a Naicker house... couldn't act or speak or even eat independently" (111). Her intellectual maturity and an understanding about the nature of caste occur while she is in the church. Fear and obedience are tools in the hands of the powerful to ensure the subservience of Dalits and all the marginalized peoples.

Bama's return to the Dalit locality assumes significance here. Space becomes a symbol for her. She comes to the place which originally birthed her identity, gave her the idea that she is a Dalit. It solidifies her rejection of the upper caste Christian hypocrisy and caste ideology itself. It is also a positive response to the trauma she endures. Traumatized selves exhibit 'centripetal and centrifugal tendencies" (Viser Irene 109). In the case of Bama, her homecoming signals a consolidation of identity, solidarity with her community which gives her a sense of belonging. She writes in her autobiography: "rather than live with a fraudulent smile, it is better to lead a life weeping real tears" (122). The Dalit subject emerging from the throes of spatialization effect re-imagines herself by "a sense of belonging, a kinship and mutual trust" (109). In a stunning move, she reclaims that very marginal space allotted to her and her community to conduct her politics. In *Joothan* and *The Scar*, Gunasekara's autobiography, there is a movement away from the village environment into city spaces where the acts of assertion are conducted.

To go back to Valmik's progress, he becomes an officer at the Ordnance Factory, Chandrapur but still caste seems to influence his experiences. He realizes that "however high an officer he may become, he cannot change his caste" (132). The 'cuts' he has obtained in the name of caste makes him 'introverted and irritable" (3). For Valmiki, the more modern democratic space of a government office is where his politics of protest happens. "It is not that I protest now. However my approach is different now. However my approach is

different. Now I can take it with an attitude that it is a social disease that I am contending with. When caste is the basis of respect and merit, important for social superiority, this battle can't be won in a day" (132). He calls for a 'consciousness of struggle' that creates social change. In *The Scar*, Gunasekar's obsession with song and music gives him a way out of caste identification. These male autobiographical selves enter new spaces of office and art where they negotiate with caste and identity.

Another way trauma-causing space can be made transformed into a positive space is seen in *Untouchable Spring*. It is described as a memory novel that spans four generations of Dalit struggle from the pre-colonial era to the period of naxalite rebellion in the post-colonial era. Yellana, the mala bhairaghi records the heroic tale of the capture of the mound in his songs which is orally transmitted. Ruth, Yellana's son's daughter-in-law and Reuben decide to have the birth of their first born son, Immanuel, in Yellana's house in Yennela Dinni. Reuben's grandson Jessie and grand-daughter Ruby, active participants in the naxalite movement, secretly marry in that house. In Ruby's words spoken later to Ruth and Mary: "The two of us met like that. We have a goal in front of us" (257).

What happens here is the memorialization of Yellana's house. It is given the significance of a splendid architectural space or museum that is supposed to revive one's memory of the past. Yellana's house is a monument to the suffering and the cultural resistance offered to the dominant caste regimes in his songs. The trauma of pain, death (for Yellana dies in that house after roaming around the villages), economic deprivation and the desire for recognition of one's self-respect are bundled into that architecture that Reuben erects in memory of generations of struggle against caste oppression. The later generations carry forward that mission; Ruby boldly asserts 'we have a goal in front of us.' Bachelard's suggestion of 'topoanalysis' is relevant at this point. Yellana's house freezes the "discrete moment" of memory of Dalit cultural assertion. Yellana's house is a site deeply rooted in history and memory. Re-connection with it is imperative for Ruben, Jessie and Ruby for it recuperates their identity and energizes them for future struggle against different forms of oppression.

So in summation, the positionality of space and the spatiality of power are significant themes in the texts analysed here. Space seems to enter the consciousness of people immersed in caste ideology. Dalit phenomenology of space especially the public spaces has oppressive, yet at the same time a recuperative/constitutive, transactive/negotiatory roles. It embraces dialectical motions of upper caste oppression and Dalit assertion. The mental, emotional experiences of Dalits seem to be predicated on the spatialization process. What happens in the private spaces of Dalit homes in relation to Dalit patriarchy has not been the focus here. The space-power-trauma matrix makes the politics of space crucial to the politics of Dalit assertion.

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## Reflection of Cultural Memory with the Portrayal of Nadine Gordimer's *The Conservationist*

Memory is a record of culture, history, thought or events of the past stored in the mind, transmitted down from generation to generation to assert and commemorate the past. "Memory is the source of personal growth and serves for the expansion of moral community", says Freeman (1).

The recollection and narration of the past, giving special merit to the evolution of the bygone past ideals, rise in the recent century. A peculiar attribute of post-modern tendency is to relocate the hidden past, thereby creating an awareness among the individuals regarding their own personal and national identity, their culture and history and their customs and mannerisms.

The writers of the post-modern period strive hard to emphasize the past, in order to focus on the value systems that have been degenerated. They desired to rejuvenate the lost past, cultural values and the traditional path that would certainly pave way for the betterment of human nature. Memory narration is a remedy to the modern psychological problem of forgetting the past. Narrating the events of memory enables the particular individual and his pre-societal norms to be focussed.

Narration evolves only when an individual starts framing the story of his life, which is of the collected past, the influenced present and the imagined future. Though memory originates in the early childhood, only in the adolescent period, an individual starts recollecting all the incidents that have been embedded in his memory. The socio-communicative interaction profusely helps in narrating the past with much significance, since society contributes much information regarding the individual traits and also the social, political and historical occurrences around him.

Individual memory constitutes the events related to the personal self. Collective memory is the shared cultural values and beliefs that an individual communicates with the society. Collective memory is accumulated information of various people regarding their identity, selfhood, nation and their peculiar aspects. Interaction assists everyone to know about the notion of each other and their culture. Culture is an essential factor that makes the society to be accustomed to specific rules and behavioural norms that in turn would polish and shape any personality. Culture has a significant role in exploring the individual and his identity. Though culture stands for communication, memory and narration are the vital tools to carry out the cultural aspects.

Similarly, history plays a commendable role in influencing any person psychologically and also in forming individual identity. It also enriches the person to frame an idea about the nation and to understand his position in the world. History is the backdrop in narration. Hence the factors such as culture and history are recognised in the mind of Nadine Gordimer, a post-modern Afro-American writer who makes use of the concept of memory and narration in extending the cultural memory in the novel *The Conservationist*.

The major concern of Gordimer in the novel revolves around the sincere conflict between Africa's past and present, tradition and modernity, nativity and foreignness, individual self ideals and the collective ideals of the community, adding concepts of corruption, the economic disparities, and misguidance in the westernised Africa. Her endeavour to bring the impact and the brutal consequences of Negritude, Africans being the pawn in the hands of the colonial conquerors is a pathetic narration of Africans in the colonised world.

Gordimer exposes in her novel, with a proclamation that Africa also possesses an immense culture but has lost its rigidity only with the powerful authority of the western occupation. She describes the condition of the aboriginal Africans who feel themselves being isolated from their own native African landscape and culture, who being unable to accept the hostility of the rulers. She is one of the representatives working upon the crucial condition the Africans encountered during the colonial period. The picture of the real lifetime experiences of Africa constitutes the literature of Africa in the true sense.

She also explicates the condition of Africa in the pre and post apartheid period. She works upon the retelling of the earlier tradition of Africa, the colonial struggles, slavery, wanting of liberation, fighting for selfhood, racialism and its output, and the black consciousness. This novel is also the confrontation between the conquerors and the conquered, the indigenous natives and the western intrusion. The years after 1945 greatly witnesses African Literature as a strenuous attempt of the oral tradition as the only way of commemorating the past treasures and to bring back the value of their nativity. Gordimer's novel is one such vital illustration replenishing the past but exhibiting it in a different track showing the life of an African in an African perspective inspite of being an Afro-American. The themes such as alienation, unsettled memories of the Africans, exhibiting the inner turmoil in the mind of the African subjects, oppression, social and economic insecurity, political turbulences and racial conflicts are well said in the novel *The Conservationist*.

The novel of Gordimer always struggle to show the individual's cultural consciousness.

The novel expresses the hazardous mishappenings and atrocities in Africa educating an awareness socially, imbibing in them a national identity recalling the Africans about the colonialistic impact and the injustice and inhumanities subjugated upon them. Gordimer is one among the writers who is much concerned with the past and the present history of their country and her works are a replica of such concern. The relative demerits of the culture are brought out through the simplistic narration. The greatest impact of colonisation with its transformation in the African culture and the slowly emerging awareness on their own national identity and also on their innumerable problems find their outlet in *The Conservationist*. Gordimer throws light chiefly on the trials and tribulations being brought by apartheid, the employment of numerous details to draw the physical landscape of South Africa and the imbalances in the world of an alienated African.

*The Conservationist* draws the degradation of the power of South Africa with images being woven around the mesmerising landscape. The novel centres on Mehring, through the recollection of the novelist on the emoluments enjoyed by Mehring and the tragic circumstances of personal sufferings that forges him to challenge life.

The *Conservationist* of Gordimer includes multiple narrative voices being dislocated with mainly the narration being unreliable. The novelist employs the skill of invoking flashbacks, memories, and the stream of consciousness through the protagonist Mehring,

South African industrial elite. It is only from the monologues of Mehring that his character is vividly picturised. Being a rich industrialist, a director of an investment fund, he decides to buy a farm to make contact with the farm and also to live a happy life inaccessible to common people. Mehring's four-hundred-acre farm serves as a central place where most of the action takes place. He does not find ease with the nearby ethnic groups, especially the Africans, though wishes for a peaceful life. He is again unbearable to his mistress Antonia and the son Terry who consider him to be too narrow in his ideas regarding the land. He travels towards the quest for self-identity and considers himself high by the racial and the social position, greatly fails to understand others. He seems to be bound together by the ideologies of Apartheid, representing the oppressiveness in South Africa.

The narration of the physical landscape of South Africa becomes the core of the novel. The narration is woven around the capitalist sector in South Africa, for whom apartheid seems to be a critical situation. The main fault of Mehring is that he being a White is blind towards the historical conventions of Africa and is dumb in understanding that the Whites are not the possessions of the native land but just the colonizers.

Mehring's memory or the inner monologues profoundly analyses that South Africa is a land of traditional values, cultural beliefs, deep rooted customs with people having been slaves for a very long time over centuries. The memory of Mehring also draws on his own flaw in comprehending the natives and their sufferings inspite of his own feeling of being naive towards the landscape and the mind of the Africans. He thinks of his gone wife and son, the absence of his mistress who could not tolerate his conservative tendencies on the land. This kind of the protagonist remembering and narrating out the characters and the events in his memory is vital in the novel. His understanding stabilises only with the incident of the dead man's body being found on the land. The body is not even concerned as a stranger, but later buried somehow. The ironical situation is Mehring realises it in another manner, that the body does not allow itself to get buried and comes up to the surface, which is then buried by the people of Africa as their own man. The dead body being propelled by the land itself is a symbol for the instability of the land in accepting its own natives inside its womb. Only at this instance, the protagonist realises his own instability in the land and understands himself completely. Mehring finds out that his buying a land in another man's native land with an idea to make himself dominative in another's world is an ironical treatment that he has meted out on himself. The egoistical attitude of Mehring dissolute with a clear picture of the honesty and the ignorance, the pathetic situation of the natives, the conflicts and the struggles in which the natives would have been torn. The real situation is mingled with his own consciousness and extends a long narrative. The memory of Mehring shows that the natives possess continuity, tradition, authority, a family structure, moral values, cultural beliefs which he has lacked. Though there is multiple voiced narration, giving place to pessimistic views, the historical and the cultural account of Africans' is stressed with a powerful historical conventions. The novel also optimistically brings to the core of narration that the land must be owned only by the natives and not by the foreigners.

The sense of isolation which the protagonist experience is because of his inability to accept the reality of living in another man's land. He refuses the invitations of his kith and kin, discomfoting himself which leaves him to be abandoned by his wife and son. It is through the voice of Mehring, the novelist brings to the surface the nature of White South Africans, their own assumptions on the natives to be under them. Mehring himself underscores that

those black men who do difficult labour that they can't afford to buy meat and generously offer them cheap clothing as gifts and pieces of meat. But during that night, the meat is tasted by the dog, since there is no place for the workers to store the meat. Such a self centred man, Mehring is, that he finds no way to store the meat safely or even to secure the dog. He does not seem to have an inch of care for the children of those workers or never cared about their filthy conditions, rather yelled at the pitiful means. Mehring seems to have ignored the medical care to be given to the workers, instead wanted them not to be stinky when witnessed by him.

Mehring goes to the extent of buying a land in the world of natives as a part of his owning a land but then he does not realise that though he buys a part of their land, he can never own their feeling. He also feels impossible to live a life in the land of Africa as an African, rather a polished and dominative life of a White, commanding and neglecting the natives. After buying the farm, he gorgeously roams in it, his walk in his piece of land as a foreigner. His presence in the farm is seen with a satisfaction that he has within himself and boasts that he sincerely struggles for a higher meaning in life. With the only feel of being rich, he fails to make any amendments in his thoughts that the natives have their feel of nostalgia. He imagines that since he has patronised Jacobus, the farm manager working all the way for Mehring, he can powerfully roam around mastering the natives.

It is only through the discovery of the dead body on the farm, that the narrative exposes the shallowness and the meaninglessness in the life of Mehring. Finally he realises that his life lacks roots that though he is rich, he does not really own anything rather stand as a solitary individual. It is through the mishappenings that happen to the dead body that Mehring comes to a self realisation of his solitary life and becomes dumb. The dead man lying in the remote corner of the farm symbolises the vague future of Mehring and South Africa itself. Henceforth the protagonist serves as the tool through which Gordimer employs the concept of memory and narration to narrate the exact state of the black in the hands of the White and also the mentality of the Whites in the African land.

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## Real and Imagined Spaces: The Study on the Presentation of Culture and History in Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines*

### Abstract

*Amitav Ghosh has won many privileges for his fiction that is keenly intertwined with history. His fiction is distinguished by strong themes that may be sometimes identified as historical novels. He uses history against imagination and reality against fiction. His re-invention of history incorporates the real and the unreal, the factual and the fictive. His fictional characters wrapped around historical events in order to blend the historical with the unhistorical or the real with the unreal and the imaginative. Ghosh's tendency towards the marginalized people will be read through a comparison of historical and unhistorical characters. He dispenses his unhistorical characters an alternate space as he positions them as competitors to historical characters. His imagination takes a shape of the fancy and the queer in his work. This paper sets out to address the depiction of transcultural space in Amitav Ghosh memory novel *The Shadow Lines*. Space as a place of contact as well as conflict is a predominant feature in the fictional sphere of Ghosh. In fact, space, imagined or remembered, appears to have a profound influence on the novelist and his protagonists in many of his major works. *The Shadow Lines* is about the voyage of a family to an old address that has been left behind but a new address created in the present. Through the shadowy lines that separate and connect, the author portrays the life of an individual, a family, a society and a nation. The shadow obscures the lines between memory and reality, personal and general, emotion and practicality, communal and religious, violence and normalcy, India and Bangladesh, India and England, partition and migration, past and present.*

**Keywords:** Culture, Border, Space, History, Selfhood.

Spatial literary studies operate in the realm of literary geography, literary cartography, geo-philosophy, geo-poetics, geocriticism and the spatial humanities. Generally they have helped to reframe or to transform the contemporary criticism in various ways on the active relations among space, place and literature. The three main terms literary cartography, literary geography and geocriticism deal about the issues of space, place and mapping after the spatial turn in literary and cultural studies. Spatial criticism is not limited to the so-called real world, but often calls into questioning the facile distinction between real and imaginary spaces.

Robert T. Tally, in his *Spatiality* states, “Edward Soja has referred to as the “real and imagined” spaces with which people are so intimately connected, and that the literary cartography produced in narratives than becomes a way for readers to understand and think their own social spaces” (6). Soja has developed a theory of Third Space in which 'everything comes together,' subjectivity and objectivity, the real and imagined, the knowable and the unimaginable, everyday life and unending story.

Amitav Ghosh's *The Shadow Lines* is no more the work of imagination than it is a deliberation of reality. It is a memory novel which weaves together past and present,

childhood and adulthood, India and Bangladesh and Britain, Hindu and Muslim, story and event through the twine within twine of memories. Amitav Ghosh has divided the novel into two parts 'Going Away' and 'Coming Home'. It becomes the fictional treatise of classical anthropology's reproduction of distinct cultures and the associated ideology of nationalism. Ghosh in this novel challenges the traditional portrayal of nation as an eccentric entity. He appraises the lines that delineate nations as 'shadowy' and unreal. Shadow lines appear not only between countries, but also between imagination and reality, the past and the present, memory and desire. The story revolves around two families, the Datta- Chaudhuris of Bengal and the Prices of London which covers three generations. It sets the backdrop of the civil conflict in post-Partition East Bengal and riots in Calcutta.

The narrator's uncle Tridib, who is an archeologist endowed with an imagination. He teaches the narrator to use his imagination to envision the location in mind while telling the incidents. Tridib instigates in him a longing to imagine familiar and unfamiliar places in memory and imagination. In short, it is Tridib's gift of imagination that kindles in the narrator a desire to travel around the globe. Both characters have a fondness to study maps to develop and discover their distinct sense of travelling to places without any kind of mental and physical border or barrier. Cultural space can be composed and unknown can be experienced existing in the imagination. After all, "that a place does not merely exist, that it has to be invented in one's imagination" (TSL, 23).

Tridib indicates places on the Bartholomew's Atlas and also tells him the stories about them. "Tridib had given me worlds to travel in and he had given me eyes to see them with" (TSL, 22). This gives streaks to the narrator's cartographic imagination which leads to the termination of spatial boundaries. The narrator likes Tridib in his detachment, his 'differences' from others. For him, Tridib's stories are a portal to the world. Through Tridib's instruction, the narrator concedes the contemporaneity of the past and the lines that delineates imagination and reality. Constant interchange of reality and imagination in the transcultural awareness of the narrator makes him believe that reality does not lie in perceivable and clear existence, but in what is recognized and reinforced by the shadows of memory. His belief in imagination is so resistant that states no one can see a place unless he or she imagines it in his or her mind. To him, only imagination is capable to present a luminous and enduring picture of reality.

Historical events and imaginative fiction are precisely interlaced into the narrative fabric of Ghosh's novels. The history which he depicts in his novels is fictionalized and it is an allegorical representation of destabilized history in which an attempt is made to fill the gaps and the absences. In *The Shadow Lines*, the plot is constructed around the actual historical events like Second World War and the post-Partition communal riots which broke out in certain parts in India and Pakistan. The novel also focuses on the events that happened in the far end of 1963 and in 1964. The narrator has experienced the communal riot in Calcutta when he was a young boy that happened in 1964 and his analysis of the difference of perception that imbues the recording of such incidents. The author finds an inadequate portrayal of such historical events in these sources and then it goes on to analyze the reasons behind such silences. By the end of January 1964 riots had faded away from the pages of the newspapers, disappeared from the collective imagination of people and vanished without leaving a trace in the histories and bookshelves.

The author uses the fate of nations (India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh) to examine the

connectedness and separation to offer observations about a complex political conflict in the post-partition subcontinent between two major ethnic communities of Hindus and Muslims. The story travels over diverse geographical and national landscapes in which memory and imagination reinvent historical reality; Ghosh pinnacles the “shadows” of imaginary and remembered spaces that domain all characters in the novel as they struggle to narrate their personal and collective histories to each other. At the same time, these “shadows” in the form of “national boundaries” not only exploit private and political spheres, but also demonstrate an individual's lifelong struggles to win over artificial borders, invading the space of home, territory, and motherland.

In order to bring out the irony of dividing ancient cultures and civilizations by drawing borders and giving a new name to a piece of mutual territory, Ghosh contends the sinister smoke screens of nationalism hitherto unknown on the Indian subcontinent till the partition of the subcontinent in 1947 through the all-pervasive metaphor of “shadow lines” in the novel. However, the trope of “shadow lines” points not only to the ambivalence of nation and national borders, but more importantly to the grey realms of imagination and memory in narrating historical truths. Consequently, both imagination and memory remain central to the representation of imaginary and remembered spaces in the novel.

In Ghosh fiction, space is not merely remembered as an imaginative erected but is represented as realm political and cultural experience. It represents as vital arrangements between people, places, cultures and societies. This space is addressed not only as a space of human and cultural encounters, but of overlapping histories and territories, shifting countries and continents where different people, cultures, nations and communities communicate above the “shadow lines” of social, national and territorial barriers. Hence, the idea of transcultural spaces in the novel brings out the role of national ideologies in shaping personal memory and collective history.

Everyone in the novel hovers over the shadow lines between imagination and reality, everyone has his or her stories and memories that are based partly on imagination, partly on reality, and when they are retold they are relived as well. They interlink and participate in each other, so that in the end the boundary between fact and fiction, imagination and reality disappears and everything becomes part of an imaginative perceived experience of real life. Imagination is not just a part of reality it also can create its own reality.

Amitav Ghosh, in his novels, seems to be in search of spaces in the dark streaked lines across cultures and he tries to find out the blend of black and white. He explores the shadowed dark lines through the struggles of the people. He delves deep into the silent recesses of human kind. He does not challenge silence but encounters it with courage. In *The Shadow Lines*, the unknown narrator completes the story and silence takes over throughout the novel. The past, present and future fuse together and it is difficult to differentiate them in the smeared lines. The novel explores the historical events through the imagination of the narrator which triumphs and it must remain distance from reality.

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## “Like” - An Appropriate Substitute for Prepositions in Nigerian English Usage?

*The use of English in second language settings is not without attending challenges. Despite all measures taken by scholars to ameliorate substandard English usage by Nigerians, there are still notable areas of shortcomings. This study investigates the use of like as a substitute for prepositions by selected Nigerians with a view to unveiling the possible factors that motivate wrong usage, and the ungrammaticality resulting thereof while also proffering possible means of avoiding misuse of prepositions. Issues of language contact and bilingualism are very much relevant to this research. Excerpts from purposively sampled interviews on radio and television featuring purposively selected educated Nigerians served as data for this study. These were analysed using descriptive statistics. The study reveals that participants adopted “like” in strings of expressions where prepositions ought to have been used. This may be largely due to the confusing nature of prepositions in which two or more prepositions are capable of featuring appropriately in the same contexts and with the same semantic imports. “Like” seems to readily come in handy as a substitute for the seemingly confusing English prepositions. Also, participants in this study are products of tertiary education but findings reveal that there is no correlation between their level of education and their use of prepositions. Educated Nigerians are to be more conscious of their use of prepositions, especially in the mass media because upcoming educated Nigerians may pick up this mannerism. This may negatively affect the performance of students in grammar tests in examinations.*

### Introduction

Research, over the years, has shown the gradual development of *like* and the rapid expansion of its unconventional functions among Nigerian users of English. Olayemi (2005) (unpublished M.A thesis) announces the emergence of these new discourse markers in a study involving an examination of the discourse markers used by undergraduates in an ESL University setting. In a paper presented at the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the Curriculum Organisation of Nigeria (CON) at Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Ogun State, 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2006, published in 2007, Olayemi refers to *as in* and *like* as “go-between in speech” in her research on the current trends in the spoken English of Nigerian undergraduates. At the first Mid-Term Conference of the Reading Association of Nigeria (RAN), Ibadan, Oyo State between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of October, 2007, published in 2008, Olayemi refers to *as in* and *like* as “as-in-lised English register” with a focus on variation in usage in terms of users' gender. In all of the studies, speech samples in both formal and informal contexts are analysed. The present study, however, reveals the unaccustomed use of *like* as a substitute for prepositions in formal speech situations and the implications of such usage. This time, both graduates and undergraduates feature as participants in the study.

### Statement of the Problem

Scholars have emphasised that the use of English prepositions is not without some challenges, especially for many second-language-users. Eyisi (2003), Olayemi (2010), Jalali

and Shojaei (2012), Delija and Koruti (2013), **Bilal et al (2013)**, Sotiloye, Bodunde, and Olayemi (2015) etc. all confirm the occurrence of prepositional errors in the use of English by ESL users. Since the English language has its definite structural pattern which does not match other languages, prepositional errors will occur “if learners make assumptions of semantic equivalence between the first and second languages”. This is the submission of Lam (2009:3), and according to Gocsik (2004), prepositions is the primary source of grammatical errors for learners of English as a foreign language.

**Bilal et al (2013)** examine the English prepositional errors exhibited in the written specimen of 100 randomly selected secondary school students of Pakistan, while learning English as their second language. The paper identifies, describes, categorises and explains errors relating to prepositional usage in the gathered written data. Findings show that interference of Urdu (L1 of learners) is maximum as the results exhibit the dominance of L1 in prepositional errors, especially. This is because of the mismatch between English and Urdu. The study therefore suggests the need for exploring new teaching strategies, particularly to teach tricky areas of second language such as prepositions. One of these is that learners should be provided an ample exposure to language so that they learn prepositions in different contexts.

Studies carried out by Olayemi from 2005 till date, prove that there is a gradual development from a scanty use of *like* to a preponderant, careless usage among Nigerian undergraduates. There is therefore the need to investigate the use of *like* with respect to prepositions and also create awareness about the grave consequences of its unaccustomed uses in this regard, particularly by educated Nigerians in completely formal settings.

### Function Words

Function words are usually without independently identifiable meanings. They are words whose meanings are identified by means of the grammatical roles or functions they perform within a sentence. Words in this category are the articles – *a, an, and the*, the conjunctions – *and, but, or, as if etc.*, auxiliary verbs, and prepositions. The purpose of employing such words in any given string of sentence is to help the syntax of the sentence so that it becomes grammatically acceptable. In other words, function words perform grammatical rather than semantic functions in sentences. In this study, attention is on prepositions - words that usually precede a noun or pronoun. A preposition expresses a relation to another word or element. It is a word or group of words used before a noun or pronoun to relate such a noun or pronoun to some other constituents of the sentence within which it exists. Examples are *in, at, for, with, to* etc.

### The Conventional Uses of *Like* in English

*Like*, apart from occurring as a main verb, may also occur as a preposition or a conjunction in a given sentence, no doubt. Examples of the ways *like* is being used in English in formal contexts are shown in the sentences below.

- i. The boy is so **like his father**. (Used as a preposition to mean *similar to* or *in the manner of*)
- ii. There are a lot of ways you might amuse yourself – **like taking a long walk**, for instance. (Used as a preposition to mean *such as*)



Let's listen to you  $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{like} \\ \downarrow \\ \text{Prep} \\ \downarrow \\ \text{in/for} \end{array} \right\}$  60 seconds.  
 Let's listen to you  $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{like} \\ \downarrow \\ \text{Prep} \\ \downarrow \\ \text{in/for} \end{array} \right\}$  60 seconds.

Either of the prepositions – *in* and *for* is appropriate where *like* is used in this sample.

Sometimes, the speaker intends to state the time or the frequency of occurrence of the action(s) he describes. *Like* comes in at this point where a preposition would have been suitable if a specified period or number of times is to be stated. This is shown in samples 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 below. However, there may be no need for any estimated time to be given since it is common knowledge that a particular event is going to take place at an already publicised date and time as we have in sample 7 below. It then appears that the speaker uses the expression *like* before a stated time or period not because he is not sure of the exact time of the event but as a means of avoiding the use of an appropriate preposition which he, perhaps, may not know or may not be sure of.

**SAMPLE 4:** I sleep **like 2am every morning.** (*The proprietor of a privately-owned University answering the question on how he started and how he manages his time amidst his crowded schedules, Saturday, August 23, 2014, Time: 11am-11.30am, LTV8, Interview*)

I sleep  $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{like} \\ \downarrow \\ \text{Prep} \\ \downarrow \\ \text{at} \end{array} \right\}$  2am every morning.  
 I sleep  $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{like} \\ \downarrow \\ \text{Prep} \\ \downarrow \\ \text{at} \end{array} \right\}$  2am every morning.

In this speech sample, *like* is used where the preposition – *at* can be used.

**SAMPLE 5:** You will sing for us maybe **like 15 minutes** (*Female, TV presenter interviewing a gospel artiste, Friday, Nov. 21, 2014, 3pm, LTV8*)

You will sing for us maybe  $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{like} \\ \downarrow \\ \text{Prep} \\ \downarrow \\ \text{for} \end{array} \right\}$  15 minutes  
 You will sing for us maybe  $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{like} \\ \downarrow \\ \text{Prep} \\ \downarrow \\ \text{for} \end{array} \right\}$  15 minutes

The preposition – *for* is replaced by *like* in sample 5 above.

**SAMPLE 6:** The football match is **going to be like 12 midnight.** (*Female, TV presenter, Tuesday, August 4, 2014, 9.30am-10am, Channels TV*)

The football match is going to be  $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{like} \\ \downarrow \\ \text{Prep} \\ \downarrow \\ \text{at} \end{array} \right\}$  12 midnight.  
 he football match is going to be  $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{like} \\ \downarrow \\ \text{Prep} \\ \downarrow \\ \text{at} \end{array} \right\}$  12 midnight.

*Like* is used in place of the preposition – *at* in sample 6 above.

**SAMPLE 7:** I don't agree with you. I'm a civil engineer by profession. When I was in 200 level, I could walk from here to ... (He mentions the name of the place) **like 30 minutes.** (Male, Graduate - An engineer, Saturday, Sept. 27, 2014, 12 noon to 1.00pm, OGTV Interview, Topic: “The importance of gadgets - phones, I-pad, androids, etc.”)

I could walk from here to the place  $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{like} \\ \downarrow \\ \text{Prep} \\ \downarrow \\ \text{in} \end{array} \right\}$  **30 minutes.**

I could walk from here to the place  $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{in} \end{array} \right\}$  **30 minutes.**

In this sample, *like* is used in place of *in*.

**SAMPLE 8:** (Commenting on power supply) I have not seen the Account Officer **like two years now** and I pay an average of seventeen thousand naira every month. (Male, Graduate, with two other male participants on set, 2014, 11am-11.30am, LTV 8, Interview)

I have not seen the Account Officer  $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{like} \\ \downarrow \\ \text{Prep} \\ \downarrow \\ \text{in} \end{array} \right\}$  **two years now**

I have not seen the Account Officer  $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{in} \end{array} \right\}$  **two years now**

The preposition – *in* is replaced by *like* in this sample.

**SAMPLE 9:** (Commenting on power supply) During the night, they take and bring light **like ten minutes interval.** I don't bother so that they don't kill me in my prime (Male, Graduate, another one of three participants on set, 2014, 11am-11.30am, LTV 8, Interview)

They take and bring light  $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{like} \\ \downarrow \\ \text{Prep} \\ \downarrow \\ \text{at} \end{array} \right\}$  ten minutes interval.

They take and bring light  $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{at} \end{array} \right\}$  ten minutes interval.

Sometimes, the preposition replaced by *like* occurs in the midst of other words which may be nouns. The speaker avoids this entirely and wraps up all of the expression(s) needed in his use of *like*. A good example of this is seen in sample 6 below:

**SAMPLE 10:** You have the chair that kind of like reach **like your low back.** (Female, Senior Physiotherapist, in a State University Teaching Hospital on set with another male colleague, Sept. 24, 2014, 1.00pm-2.00pm, LTV 8, Interview, Topic: Ergonomics of the Office and Workplace: All you Need to Know)

You have the chair that kind of like reach  $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{like} \\ \downarrow \\ \text{Prep} \\ \downarrow \\ \text{areas around} \end{array} \right\}$  your low back.

You have the chair that kind of like reach  $\left\{ \begin{array}{c} \text{areas around} \end{array} \right\}$  your low back.

The prepositions *in, at, around, for* and *since* are seen to be replaced by *like* in the speech samples.

### **The Communicative Functions of the Use of *Like* As A Substitute for Prepositions**

With the use of *like* as a replacement for prepositions, communication in English appears easy for the Nigerian user. He is able to scale the hurdle of grappling with what preposition is appropriate in what context. With the adoption of *like* at points where specific prepositions would have been suitable, he is able to rattle on and keep talking. He achieves a level of fluency and the talk task seems more convenient.

### **The Implications of The Use of *Like* As A Substitute For Prepositions in Formal Public Speaking in English**

Although *like* can occur as a preposition, its use in contexts where other English prepositions are appropriate results has Rickford and Rickford (2004:260) record the following about African-American and mainstream languages:

While it is important that differences between African American and mainstream language not be misdiagnosed as deficit, for instance, it is also important that articulation, intelligibility and fluency disorders among black children not be underestimated or misdiagnosed, so that effective and timely treatment can be provided.

The same can be said of the use of *like* by educated Nigerian users of English. The use of the discourse marker - *like* as a substitute for prepositions is not without certain implications for speech, especially in formal settings. These implications are discussed in the section below.

#### **i. Ungrammaticality Resulting from the Substitution of *Like* for Prepositions**

The use of *like* as a substitute for prepositions results in ungrammatical expressions which are not acceptable in formal discourse. Although the English prepositions are difficult to learn, especially by second language learners of English, the discourse marker - *like* is grammatically not an adequate substitute for them.

#### **ii. Unintended Meanings as a Result of the Substitution of *Like* for Prepositions**

The analyses of the data collected show the use of *like* as a substitute for prepositions. This usage results in unintended meanings. Consider sample 4 above.

I sleep **like 2am every morning**. (*Male, proprietor of a privately-owned university*)  
The statement ought to be *I sleep at 2am every morning*.

This use of *like* as substitute for the preposition *at* reflects a comparison which expresses the resemblance of one thing to another of a different category. The speech implies that the speaker does not sleep like a human being would do. As soon as he is about to sleep, he takes off the human form and becomes 2am! This is undoubtedly not the speaker's intended meaning. An imaginary picture of this description is shown below:



Fig. 1.1 A pictorial representation of the unintended meaning of the expression – *I sleep like 2am*

Another example of the substitution of *like* for preposition which results in unintended meaning is seen in sample 3 above.

*(Presenter interviewing a gospel artiste) Let's listen to you like 60 seconds.*

In this case, the listeners will be listening like 60 seconds not like the human beings they are. Imagine 60 seconds sitting on a chair and listening to the gospel artiste! This ought to be:

*Let's listen to you **in** 60 seconds. Or*

*Let's listen to you **for** 60 seconds.*

Consider sample seven also: I could walk from here to that place like 30 minutes.

This suggests that 30 minutes is also capable of walking here and there!

If *like* is to be regarded as a discourse marker, it must indeed perform the functions of a marker of discourse such as occurring before content words to help the speaker to make an appropriate choice, occurring as an utterance filler in which case the speaker tries to hold on to the discourse floor to prevent other participants from interfering and taking over the floor, occurring after omitted content words so that the speaker is able to avoid the ongoing difficult stretch of sentence he may likely not be able to complete successfully and begin another more convenient string of sentence etc. However, when *like* occurs as a substitute for content words such as nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs as shown in Olayemi's (2014) study, or as a substitute for prepositions as revealed in this present study, it indicates that the discourse marker has expanded or extended usage in Nigerian English.

### **iii. Possible Confusion Arising from Non-Specificity of the Time or Period of an Action**

In some of the samples, the speakers seem to be careless or unconcerned about making the listener to understand the time of the actions that are expressed in their speeches. See samples 4, 8, and 9 for example.

**SAMPLE 4:** I sleep **like 2am every morning**.

**SAMPLE 8:** (*Commenting on power supply*) I have not seen the Account Officer **like two years now** and I pay an average of seventeen thousand naira every month.

**SAMPLE 9:** (*Commenting on power supply*) During the night, they take and bring light **like ten minutes interval**. I don't bother so that they don't kill me in my prime

The listener is left to guess if the speaker is actually stating a specific period of time or is giving an estimated period as the use of *like* in this manner encourages an imprecise way of speaking. This increases his (the listener's) task in his bid to keep track of the details needed for him to be an effective participant in the ongoing communication process. In these samples, one of two things would have been done – a preposition indicating exactness in relation to time or period could have been adopted or the adverb – *about* indicating approximation could have been used with a preposition e.g. *at about* in samples 4, 8, and 9 for instance.

**SAMPLE 4:**

The substitution of <i>like</i> for a preposition:	I sleep <b>like</b> 2am every morning.
The use of a preposition indicating exactness in timing:	I sleep <b>at</b> 2am every morning.
The use of a preposition with an approximative adverb	I sleep <b>at about</b> 2am every morning.

indicating an estimated time:

**SAMPLE 8:**

The substitution of <i>like</i> for a preposition:	I have not seen the Account Officer <b>lik two years now</b> .
The use of a preposition indicating exactness in timing:	I have not seen the Account Officer <b>in</b> two years now.
The use of a preposition with an approximative adverb indicating an estimated time indicating an estimated time:	I have not seen the Account Officer <b>in about</b> two years now.

**SAMPLE 9:**

The substitution of <i>like</i> for a preposition:	They take and bring light <b>like</b> ten minutes interval.
The use of a preposition indicating exactness in timing:	They take and bring light <b>at</b> ten minutes interval.
The use of a preposition with an approximative adverb indicating an estimated time indicating an estimated time:	They take and bring light <b>at about</b> ten minutes interval.

The speaker may also suggest to the listener that he is actually providing an estimated time for the action or actions expressed. The use of *maybe like* in sample 5 shows this instance.

**SAMPLE 5:** You will sing for us maybe **like 15 minutes**

The careless handling of details about specificity of time is worse when the speaker still adopts *like* to show approximation in timing even in circumstances in which the exact time of the action is already made public as shown in sample 6.

**SAMPLE 6:** The football match is **going to be like 12 midnight.**

As shown in the samples, *like* is a convenient substitute for prepositions.

If *like* becomes a substitute for prepositions as shown in the speech samples, excellent performance in spoken and written English may become impeded, particularly with respect to grammar. It follows therefore that the unconventional use of this marker may not provide much usefulness in the use of English in serious or formal contexts and in academic tasks. This is why I disagree with Ogoanah and Adeyanju (2013:44) on their submission regarding the use of *as in* and *like* in Nigerian English. This is stated below:

We maintain that there is nothing erratic or illogical in the various ways *as in* and *like* are used in Nigeria, as the usages follow the same rules as those governing the use of common discourse connectives in standardised varieties of English.

This study has showed the unconventional function of *like* as a substitute for prepositions which makes the marker behave not as a discourse marker but as an element constituting ungrammatical English usage. This nullifies the claim by Ogoanah and Adeyanju that such usage “follows the same rules as those governing the use of common discourse connectives in standardised varieties of English”.

There is the need to be careful about this unaccustomed use of *like*. If we approve of this unconventional usage in informal speech contexts, how do we get unaccustomed to it such that when we engage in completely formal discourse, where they may jeopardise effective English usage, we are able to rid it off our speech? Some people who pick this speech mannerism cannot easily let go of them. If the ungrammatical use of *like* is not to be encouraged in formal settings, then users must bear the burden of ensuring that they only employ the marker in informal speech situations and avoid it in formal speech settings. However, the process of employing and then avoiding this damaging use of *like* in different speech situations may make the task of formal public speaking onerous and entirely cumbersome, especially for second language users of English.

This study is therefore significant to English language Teaching (ELT) as it reveals the ungrammaticality resulting from the use of *like*. Note that the West African Examination Council (WAEC), the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), and other examination bodies in Nigeria often include questions testing candidates on the use of prepositions. Where candidates have been used to replacing prepositions with *like*, how would they excel in such tests? Stakeholders are to become aware of this speech behaviour and also consciously discourage students from using the façade of *like* to cover up their weakness in the language. Otherwise, the consequences might be alarming! Emphasising the

learning of prepositions in different contexts will facilitate a mastery of their usage, particularly in non-native settings.

Several categories of people – parents, teachers, researchers, have always bemoaned the poor performance of students in English language at the various levels of education in Nigeria. For instance, the Chief Examiners' Reports of May/June 2003 has it that 'despite all the efforts made to simplify the candidate's task, a good percentage of the candidates scored marks below average'. In the report of Nov/Dec 2003, it is recorded that:

...the performance of the candidates was still generally poor. Majority of the weaknesses observed in the scripts of the candidates had to do with little or no exposure to writing skills. Candidates did not show that they were conversant with the required formats in English. **Construction of loose sentences, transliteration from mother-tongues, abuse of basic rules of grammar abound in the candidates' work.** (Emphasis added)

Ten years later, the general comment on the May/June, 2013 West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) is that though candidates' performance was about average, it declined when compared to that of the previous year. The conclusion was that “the only remedy to poor performance is for schools to assist candidates to master the rudiments of the English Language” and that “candidates who do not know the grammar of the language will continue to perform poorly” in the paper. These kinds of reports should disturb educationists greatly. One common weakness identified by the Chief examiners over the years is that candidates are poorly equipped with adequate knowledge of English vocabulary and basic rules of grammar. They are therefore advised to read wide in order to improve in these areas.

### Summary of Findings

In this present study, the analysed data reveal the use of *like* in place of the prepositions - *in, at, around, for* and *since*. The instances of the occurrence of *like* in this regard are found to be more in the speech samples of the graduate participants. The availability of a substitute for the problematic prepositions appears to be a means by which the second language user of English avoids the misuse of prepositions so that he is completely free from being guilty of errors resulting from wrong choice, redundant usage, omission of prepositions etc. Going by the number of occurrence of *like* as a substitute for prepositions in the speech samples of the graduate participants among whom are media practitioners, educationists, medical doctors, etc., it can be concluded that the level of education of the users did not help in overcoming the problems that prepositions create for second language users of English.

The participants, especially the graduates used the markers as ready-made substitutes for prepositions (which have been found to be very difficult to learn) so that there is little or no challenge encountered in relation to the selection of appropriate prepositions in appropriate contexts. This has made the discourse marker – *like* to be a useful tool for managing the grammar and the organisation of the users' utterances in the ways they deem fit. Also,

### Recommendations and Conclusion

Although *like* seems to help the second language user of English to manage the grammar and the organisation of his utterances his own way, the discourse marker may also encourage

a complacent attitude towards ensuring necessary details regarding the time or duration of an action which would have required such expressions as *in twenty minutes*, *at 2am*, *for two days*, etc., in formal speech situations. These become replaced with *like twenty minutes*, *like 2am*, *like two days respectively*, all of which may also suggest an estimated time for the action expressed so that *in about twenty minutes*, *at about 2am*, and *for about two days* would have been appropriate respectively.

This current unconventional use of *like* is inappropriate. This is because of the implications that this marker holds for public speaking in English in formal contexts. It is true that public idiom, media interaction, and informality implicate certain informal features such as the use of *like* as found in this study. However, this speech habit may be promoting laziness, particularly in the mastery of English prepositions since *like* – an escapist “tool” for avoiding the challenges encountered in the use of prepositions is already a cover term for words belonging to this class. It is better for users to opt for expressions that can make the use of prepositions avoidable, where possible, rather than develop a substitute that further inhibits their performance in the English language.

Ogoanah and Adeyanju (2013) highlight the pragmatic roles of this marker in Nigerian English usage but the description of *like* on the basis of pragmaticalisation, that is its contextual functions in discourse or Heine's (2013) cooptation “whereby information units such as clauses, phrases, or words are transferred from the domain of sentence grammar and deployed for purposes of discourse organisation” is not enough. What is important is that the use of the marker has certain implications for effective performance in the English language, especially for non-native speakers, and the earlier these implications are addressed, the better.

Since participants in this study are undergraduates and graduates of tertiary institutions in Nigeria, and since among the graduates, there are media practitioners, medical doctors, popular statesmen, *et cetera*, and since the speech samples analysed in the study are drawn from popular, formal programmes on television, it is possible that primary and secondary school students may come to imbibe this kind of speech behaviour and use *like* as a substitute for prepositions even in formal settings.

Although *like* is used as a short-cut for avoiding the seemingly challenging grammatical structure of prepositions in English usage in non-native settings, it ends up being a poor tool for managing the grammar and organisation of utterances in this regard. Therefore, certain instances of its occurrence highlight some context-bound peculiarities which result in ungrammatical English usage in formal speech situations as revealed in this study.

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