Red. No. KERENGO1377/11/1/99 -TC

Indian Journal of Post Colonial Literatures is an official research publication of the Post Graduate and Research Department. of English, Newman College, Thodupuzha. Ever since its inception in the year 2000, it is being published biannually in the months of June and December. It is devoted to the studies on Postcolonial Literatures and publishes original and creative works, articles, notes, reviews, and essays. It is intended to promote and augment research mindset among professionals, scholars, researchers and students. The major objective of this journal is to explore and explicate the theoretical perceptions, cultural implications and contemporary relevance of Postcolonial Literatures.

IJPCL Vol. 18.2 (December 2018)

ESTD. 2000

INDIAN JOURNAL OF POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURES

(An International Refereed Biannual Published in June and December)

Vol. 18.2 (December 2018)

ISSN 0974 - 7370

December 2018

POST GRADUATE & RESEARCH DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
NEWMAN COLLEGE
THODUPUZHA, KERALA, INDIA

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Annual subscription rates:

India	**Rs. 2000**
All other countries	**US $50 or € 35 or £35**

The payment of subscription may be made as DD drawn in favour of **The Managing Editor, IJPCL, payable at SBI Thodupuzha** and sent to the address given below.

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Printed and published by the HOD, PG Dept. of English,
Newman College, Thodupuzha East P. O.
Printed at Printech Offset Press, TDPA. Ph: 227191

Vol. 18.2 December 2018 ISSN 0974-7370

INDIAN JOURNAL OF
POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURES

(An International Refereed Biannual Published in June and December)

CENTRE FOR ENGLISH STUDIES AND RESEARCH
NEWMAN COLLEGE
THODUPUZHA - 685 585
KERALA, INDIA

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Trotting Hooves of Modernity: An Analysis of *A Handful of Sesame*

K. Sripad Bhat

The novel is the form in which history goes all the way down.
Terry Eagleton

In his essay "Realism in the Balance" Hungarian Marxist critic Georg Lukacs makes an insightful observation about realism in fiction:

> If literature is a particular form by means of which objective reality is reflected, then it becomes of crucial importance for it to grasp that reality as it truly is, and not merely to confine itself to reproducing whatever manifests itself immediately and on the surface. If a writer strives to present reality as it truly is, i.e. if he is an authentic realist, then the question of totality plays a decisive role, no matter how the writer actually conceives the problem intellectually. (Taylor 33)

For Lukacs, the hallmark of an authentic novel lies in its ability to grapple with the 'totality' of history with all its incongruities and contradictions. Therefore, he takes the modernist writers like James Joyce to task for their refusal to confront history and for their tendency to reproduce "whatever manifests itself immediately and on the

surface." Even though his critique of modernist fiction is extremely debatable, his theorization of realism in fiction has sustained its relevance in contemporary times. Lukacs' pertinent observation about realism in novel is perfectly true in the context of the great classical realist tradition consisting of the novels by Rabindranath Tagore, Premchand, ShivaramKaranth, Vaikom Muhammad Bashir and others. These writers have exhibited remarkable ability in exploring as well as encapsulating the nuanced and complex 'lived experience' of modern India—both colonial and postcolonial— in their fiction. The classical realist tradition interrogates the complex dynamics of the interface between individual and history, as it were.

Interestingly, *A Handful of Sesame* (2018) by ShrinivasVaidya which is the English translation of his Kannada novel *Halla Bantu Halla* (2008)is a refreshing example of a novelist's ability to engage head-on with a century of colonial Indian history beginning with India's First War of Independence in 1857 and ending with India gaining freedom in 1947. The novel chronicles events in the lives of the members of three generations of Panth family from Navalgund, a small town in north Karnataka. The novel is structured like a *SthalaPurana* or place narrative since it deals with the people of Navalgund—a microcosm of India. The most significant aspect of *A Handful of Sesame*lies in its ability to portray the impact of colonial modernity on traditionalIndian way of life as reflected in the turbulent and eventful lives of three generations of Panth family.

The discourse of modernity which entered Indian subcontinent as a part of colonial baggage radically altered the material and intellectual landscape of modern India.Colonial modernity—

differentiated from the Enlightenment modernity due to its narrow but aggressive imperial agenda— manifested itself through the introduction of English education, railways, bureaucracy etc., resulting in the holistic transformation of India. However, the discourse of modernity came into conflict with 'tradition'—the complex network of beliefs and practices or what Raymond Williams calls the 'structure of feeling'.The ensuing conflict resulted in series of debates –beginning from the mid-nineteenth century continuing even in the later decades of the twentieth-century –about the relevance of modernity in Indian context generating a lot of polemical heat, to say the least. M.K.Gandhi, for instance, rejected colonial modernity on ethical grounds whereas B.R. Ambedkar embraced it for its emancipatory potential. Even great writers like Tagore and Karanth contextualized this conflict in their fictional landscape with penetrative vision and dexterity. ShrinivasVaidya's*A Handful of Sesame* achieves this great feat with exceptional ease articulated in an equally evocative style.

The novel begins with the sudden appearance of two horse riders—PadmanabhPanth and KamalnabhPanth—in the sleepy town of Navalgundwho have ridden all the way from Kanpur while being caught up in the tumultuous events of 1857 rebellion. PadmanabhPanth meets his tragic end whereas his younger brother Kamalanabh resigns to his fate and decides to settle down in Navalgund. He practises traditional medicine thus helping the local people. After his death, his son Vasudevaachar— or Vasanna as he is fondly addressed by the villagers—takes over the family responsibility. He is the protagonist of the novel who acts as a link between a receding past and a nascent future. He remains as a

passive and bewildered witness to the historical drama unfolding before him. As an orthodox Brahmin, Vasudevaachar scrupulously performs all the traditional rituals and ceremonies. As a practitioner of traditional medicine, he goes out of his way to help sick and needy people without any expectation of monetary compensation. He leads a chaste and pious life which indeed defines his 'life-world'. When his younger brother Venkanna who is a widower refuses to remarry, Vasudevaachar concurs with his wife, Tulsakka who exclaims: "But aren't there such things as traditions and norms….dos and don'ts in life?" (*Handful Sesame* 33). He gives shelter to his sister Ambakka, a widow who has returned "to her natal home dressed in a plain red *saree*and a shaven head for life…"(*Handful Sesame* 32).

Ambakka, another important character who features prominently in the novel not only accepts her "shaven head for life", but also fiercely vindicates it by saying that "For every drop of water that drips down a strand of my hair, the husband's soul rots in hell for a hundred or thousand years…which is why I must shave my head and drape myself in a red *saree*…" (*Handful Sesame* 57). Ambakka, the widow emerges as the symbol of uncompromising and rigid Brahminical orthodoxy. She is morbidly preoccupied with the norm of 'purity' and makes everyone's life miserable including her own. She is always worried that she would be 'polluted' if somebody accidentally touched her clothes hung for drying. She unwaveringly avoids the consumption of onion and garlic. When the peasants and servants hailing from the low caste communities demand onion while being served food in Panth household, Ambakka retorts: "Do they have to munch on so many stinky bulbs? The

house, it has turned into a Shudra hovel"(*Handful Sesame* 36). Ambakka gets extremely upset when she comes to know that Narayana—an orphan Brahmin boy attached to Panth household—has started smoking tobacco and mingling freely with boys from the lower caste. Ambakka and her kins' worries are narrated in the novel in the following words:

> Narayana smokes the mud-pipe…..Narayana beats the battle drums…Narayana carries the sceptre in the Muharram procession of the *saab*people…he dances with the palanquin…he eats savouries and fritters in the shops of the Lingayats….the other day, hejumped into the well in the weaver's colony and fished out someone's pot for them…..another day, he was seen driving someone's cart through Yamanoor's hutments….Narayanadoes this…Narayana does that…. (*Handful Sesame* 54)

Narayana, on the other hand, carries on with his life unmindful of the brickbats thrown at him from all the orthodox quarters. When he is denied a decent Brahmin bride due to his orphan status, he breaks the rigid caste paradigm and marries Maina, an actress in a drama troupe hailing from alower caste. Narayana is projected as a silent rebel in the novel. He reminds us of Naranappa in U.R.Ananthamurthy's*Samskara*. Both the characters challenge the Brahminical orthodoxy and embrace the changes brought about by the discourse of modernity. However, unlike Naranappa, Narayana is known for his cheerful disposition. If Naranappa is driven by his hatred of Brahmins of his village, Narayana leads a quiet life characterized by fortitude and dignity. Despite their acceptance of changed reality transformed by colonial modernity, Narayana of *A*

Handful of Sesame and Naranappa of *Samskara* occupy opposite ends of the philosophical spectrum in terms of their disposition and attitude.

Ironically, Narayana succeeds in coping with the challenges of the changed world, his orphan status notwithstanding. However, Vasudevaachar, the learned head of Panth familyfinds it difficult to confront the mundane as well as the complex realities of the modern world. On the occasion of familywedding festivities, Venkanna arranges for a dance programmeby the famous *nauch*girl Chandasani from Nargund which infuriates Vasudevaachar who utters :

> I hope you know this is wedding in a Vedic Brahmin household…not of Desai, Deshpande landlords. Do you realize there's a Vishnu fossil rock at home that's worshipped every day? You think the people of the village will spare us if we conduct these lowly song and dance things in our house? They'll rub dung on our faces, Venkya, be warned! (*Handful Sesame* 63)

While visiting his family in Dharwad, Vasudevaachar is dismayed as well as angered by the sight of hotels run by Brahmins all across the town,"Look at them…look how men and women sit together and drink that…that *ch-ha*…and eat those *biskeets*and *brayd*…god knows who makes them" (*Handful Sesame*201). Moreover, he is exasperated by the fact that nobody is following Brahminical rituals at Dharwad home, "Is this even a *bhraambr*home? Let alone the everyday *pooja*…..there's no *purana*recitation, *punyakatha*, *bhagwat*…not so much of

utterance of the lord's name is heard in this house. All they talk about is cinema…only cinema!"(*Handful Sesame* 201).

When his grandson decides to marry a girl from a non-Brahminical community, he is heartbroken. He is equally disturbed when he comes to know about his brother Venkanna's clandestine affair with a Muslim lady. Again, when his nephew Ramu joins the freedom struggle, Vasudevaachar is constantly worried about the potential reprisal from the British government. He is also under constant stress thinking that the wild idea of 'land to the tiller' might soon become a reality. Reduced to being a mere bystander, Vasudevaachar helplessly watches the slow but inexorable arrival of "that frightening modern world" (*Handful Sesame*223). When the freedom struggle is going on he reacts to the events with a mixture of anxiety and surprise: "When everyone went out for meetings and processions, Vasudevaachar and Tulsakka sat by themselves and expressed their bewilderment at how the world their children inhabited was so drastically different from their own" (*Handful Sesame* 202). Nevertheless, when India attains freedom, Vasudevaachar is overjoyed. For him, "the idea that he would die as a citizen of free country was in itself a great achievement" (*Handful Sesame* 220). But he is horrified by the communal riots taking place in the northern part of India. "As a man of medicine who had lived his life among sickness and pain and suffering of all kinds, and in spite of the morbidity had held high the flag of life, this macabre display of death towards the end of his life seemed like an unfair travail to bear" (*Handful Sesame* 220). Further, he is filled with pain and sorrow when he comes to know that the temple musician Magdum has been stabbed to death by Hindu fanatics

due to his Muslim identity. Through this incident, the novel tends to draw a distinction between virtuous traditionalism anchored in humanity and heartless religious bigotry that leaves a trail of destruction engineered in the name of God.

Unlike his widow-sister Ambakka, Vasudevaachar escapes from being a decadent traditionalist due to his humanity. His traditional medical practice gives him an identity as a saviour among the humble village people. For him, it is like his daily *pooja*without which he cannot survive. Even though he firmly believes in the hierarchical caste system, he never allows his belief to come in the way of his service to humanity. For instance, due to his religious faith Vasudevaachar never came to terms with his brotherVenkanna having a Muslim woman as his mistress. However, after his brother's death when the same Muslim lady frantically knocks at his door seeking urgent medical treatment for her baby, Vasudevaachar responds positively to her plea without any rancour or ill-will. His entire life is punctuated by such moments signifying his will and resolve to rise above the narrow walls of prejudice and faith.

There is one more 'Praneshacharya-Chandri-Union' like episode which tests Vasudevaachar's character and integrity. Rukuma, a Maratha orphan girl who grew up in Panth house hold accidentally kindles desire in Vasudevaachar:

> Vasudevaachar noticed Rukuma's heavy breathing and the tremble in her voice. He had also sensed a kind of excitement in her demeanour….Vasudevaachar who was in the prime of his youth had recognized the longing in her heavy voice, and any reluctance he might have had quickly melted away as he

> sunk down to the floor next to her and leaned back on the wall. Rukuma hugged his bent knee and hid her face in it. Her eyes were dripping tearsof desire and her nostrils flared with hot breaths. Vasudevaachar began rubbing her back. He felt her blouse tighten and his hands lost their hold over themselves and roved madly. The last link of resistance was about to come undone before he could grab her with both handsand take her when from the other side of the wall, Akkavva's baby let out a high-pitched scream and began crying….Startled, Vasanna and Rukuma shot away from each other.(*Handful Sesame* 41-42).

Luckily for Vasudevaachar, this accidental encounter with Rukuma doesn't culminate in their physical union. Given his God-fearing nature, he would have suffered throughout his life with remorse and sorrow if it were to happen.

Unlike Praneshacharya of *Samskara* who redeems and reinvents himself through his union with Chandri, Vasudevaachar comes face to face with his moment of truth during this brief but passionate moment: only a life of fidelity would protect his 'purity', thereby enabling and empowering him to continue his medical practice "with devotion and diligence and dedication" (*Handful Sesame*42). For him, life without authenticity and truthfulness amounts to death, as it were.

More importantly, Vasudevaachar is both resilient and pragmatic when it comes to reading the writing on the metaphoric wall of history. Despite fierce opposition from his own family he decides to send his sons and nephews to Dharwad for 'English

Education.' His decision is premised on sound reasoning and practical wisdom. He contends:

> This medicine practice will not sustain for long. They say there are several doctors practicing English medicine in Dharwad and Hubballi now…the government is starting clinics in every town. The Panvelcompany has raised the prices of medicines. To say that I'll give medicines only as a service to the people and to refuse to take money for it will be impossible henceforth! It is because of that, come what may, you must spend years in Dharwad and study. Only if you complete the matriculation and get jobs that will bring you salaries will this household continue to run. If not, this is the end for all of us.(127)

Initially, the members of Panth family resist this move but subsequently they too grudgingly acknowledge and appreciate his resolve to send them to an English school. For instance, they are proud of Pandu's ability to speak "*pata-pata* rapid English" (*Handful Sesame*133). Even other families in Navalgund start sending their children to Dharwad for English education and the local Lingayat pontiff too makes plans to open "an English school right there in Navalgund" (*Handful Sesame* 140).

It is true that Vasudevaachar encounters unending episodes of conflict between his traditional way of life and a world around him getting slowly transformed by the forces of modernity. He sides unflinchingly with tradition and refuses to legitimize the modern ways of life. But when it comes to the survival of the family in changing times, he is ready to compromise even to the extent of giving English

education to the children of his family.It must be noted that when English education was introduced in India, it was by and large welcomed by the members of Brahminicalcommunities across Bengal, Maharashtra and south India. Vasudevaachar's decision to seek English education for his children is indeed an authentic reflection of this historical reality.

In addition to foregrounding the conflict between tradition and modernity, the novel also weaves into the texture of narrative the issues related to Indian nationhood and freedom movement. As a matter of fact, the idea of 'nation' is inextricably connected with the discourse of modernity. As rightly pointed out by GeetaKapur, Indian modernity manifests itself through the dualism of the national/ modern, or what she calls "the double discourse of the national and modern" (Kapur288). The novel brings to the fore this 'double discourse' with exceptional intensity. In fact, the novel begins with the description of the upheaval of 1857 and its aftermath. When the freedom movement picked up pace in the early decades of the twentieth-century, it entered the nearby cities like Dharwad first and "However aloof Navalgund wished to stay, Dharwad on one side and Hubballi on the other pulled it forcibly towards the modern world" (*Handful Sesame*153). It was BalaGangadharTilak who came first to Dharwad followed by MahatmaGandhi a few years later. In the latter half of the novel we come across vivid details of the spread of Congress Movement and the way it enveloped the mind space of people at large. Ramu, the youngest member of Panth family joins freedom movement and even participates in the legendary *Salt Satyagraha*. Unfortunately, he meets a tragic end dying in a police encounter. The people of Navalgund—young and old alike—

wholeheartedly involve themselves in freedom struggle and are overjoyed when India is liberated from the colonial yoke.

The title of the novel—*A Handful of Sesame*—is highly evocative because it alludes to the age-old ritual of saying goodbye to the past in a symbolic manner. The novel is all about moving away from the problematic landscape of the past and entering into the still-evolving and indeterminate space called modern India. Even the original Kannada title of the novel—*Halla Bantu Halla*—stands for the metaphoric flood of modernity which radically transforms the intellectual, political and social landscape of India in the wake of colonial encounter.

The novel has simple linear narration articulated in an unpretentious style. It revolves around three generations of Panth family, each generation experiencing the world in its own unique way distinct from others. KamalnabhPanth, the founder of Panth family is insulated from the impact of outside world and therefore finds meaning and purpose in life defined by tradition. His son, Vasudevaachar on the other hand, both witnesses and participates in the historical drama that enacts the conflict between tradition and modernity. Keshav and Pandu— representing the third generation of Panth family— are well integrated into the modern world in terms of their outlook and vision.

A Handful of Sesame, narrated in conventional realist mode convincingly chronicles the interface between individual and history. It also tells us the story of 'making' of individuals by history. Auerbach's contention in *Mimesis*about the nineteenth-century European novel is equally true of *A Handful of Sesame:* "The

serious realism of modern times cannot represent man otherwise than as embedded in a total reality, political, social and economic, which is concrete and constantly evolving….[The novelist] not only…places the human beings whose destiny he is seriously relating, in their precisely defined historical and social setting, but also conceives this connection as a necessary one" (463).

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Contesting the Canon, Redefining the Discipline: English Studies in Richard Powers's *Galatea 2.2*

Jismy K. Joseph & M. R. Vishwanathan

With the dawn of 'Theory,' concepts from other disciplines and movements such as feminism, psychoanalysis, poststructuralism and postcolonialism have been incorporated into conventional textual and stylistic literary criticism. Consequently, in the postmodern era, literary studies and creative writing have become more eclectic and cosmopolitan with voices from the hitherto marginalized and unexplored zones. Currently, literature is being merged into the more inclusive and interdisciplinary field of Cultural Studies (questioning the status of English literature as an exclusive discipline). Such ambivalent issues, and the shifting trends in the academic community in general, are discussed in the contemporary American author Richard Powers's novel, *Galatea 2.2* (1995). This paper attempts a reading of the same, with a focus on the views of three major characters who represent different generations in the field: Richard, Professor Taylor and A.

Set in the 1990s' 'Culture War' period of the American academia, Richard Powers's *Galatea 2.2* is an "intellectually

engaging and emotionally compelling" (Kakutani) mélange of literature and artificial intelligence. The author-narrator, 'Richard Powers' returns to his alma mater U. (allegedly, the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaigne) to take up a writer-in-residence position at the Center for Advanced Sciences. In parallel, he holds the post of Visitor at the Department of English. It is through this tenure that the novel takes the readers along, with occasional flash-backs and flash-forwards. [Due to the quasi-autobiographical and metafictional nature of the text, the central character will be referred to as 'Richard' and the real author as 'Powers,' in order to avoid misidentification.]

Richard has a chance encounter with a group of scientists, leading to a wager that results in the creation of a literature-sensitive artificial intelligence system called 'Helen.' Professor Philip Lentz—a pundit in the connectionist school of artificial intelligence [arguably, modeled on the American cognitive scientist Marvin Minsky (Scholz, 299)]—bets to create a simulated brain through computer-generated neural networks that is capable of literary appreciation, within ten months, with Richard as his research assistant. It would perform on par with a Master's student of English literature, he promises. Though his colleagues object to this idea, Lentz explains that the experiment has some professional interest. He declares that the method of evaluation will be the standard Turing test: The machine and a real (human) Master's student of English literature would be tested against the machine simultaneously in an imitation game. In the end, if the evaluator is unable to distinguish the responses of the human from that of the non-human, they win; else, they lose. Lentz agrees

to give a public retraction, if the attempt fails; and the very novel turns the retraction that Richard writes.

Richard joins as Lentz's research assistant to train the artificial intelligence implementations with a selected list of English literary texts, a microcosm of the traditional canon. The two develop a series of implementations beginning from 'A' to a more modified 'H' which is later baptized by Richard as 'Helen.' Richard becomes emotionally attached to this digital Galatea. Helen develops high-level machine intelligence comparable to human consciousness. 'She' turns out to question her own existence, and the worthiness of books themselves. Finding that the prescribed list of works alone would not provide adequate knowledge to Helen, Richard feeds her with 'non-literary' texts to supplement the real-world issues.

The novel develops through deliberations on the evolution of, and changes in, what constitutes the discipline of English literature—in terms of: widening the canon, what counts as 'text,' the autonomy of English departments, limitations of disciplinary hyper-specialization, student-teacher relationships, attitude towards education, influence of technology, etc. The shifting stances are revealed through Richard, Professor Taylor (Richard's English Professor), A. (the human contesting the mechanical Master's student in the Turing Test) and the academic community around them. While Taylor belongs to an early generation of the discipline where the academia has been relatively traditional, A. is the product of a later generation with a reactionary attitude. Richard represents a transitional figure who struggles to overhaul the two streams.

Richard joined for graduation at U. aspiring to become a physicist. During that time, he happened to attend a freshman seminar by Prof. Taylor, which shifted his interest from science to literature. From then on, Taylor had a lifelong influence on Richard. He reflects: "I'd transferred from physics to literature because of one man, the incomparable Taylor" (Powers 64) who destroyed an otherwise ambitious scientific career, for good. "After my mother, the man taught me how to read. . . . He changed my life. He changed what I thought life was" (141). Richard had immense admiration for Taylor. "He had read all the books. He was fluent in the mind's native idiom" (144). Richard even imitated his mannerisms in the classroom. His influence left a mark, not only on Richard, but on all his students too. They surrounded him with their amateur writings for his invaluable comments. He had a way of making people feel smarter than they have been, Richard recollected. Even after leaving U., Richard wrote letters to him and delighted in the "Tayloresque sentences" in the replies. (200). When his beloved professor was diagnosed with cancer, he went to visit him. In Taylor's mind, he was still the eighteen-year-old student reciting Gerald Manley Hopkins's poem, 'The Windhover.' Though he was in his deathbed, he still had the same vigor about his vocation and asked Richard to get some books from the library to prepare for his forthcoming classes, if he could recover a little. Richard gave copies of his early novels when he visited Taylor during his last days. Taylor was happy about Powers' blooming literary career. Taylor's death left a void in his life like few others did. On becoming a writer, Richard developed the labyrinthine style for his memory. He turned Taylor a character

in his novel *The Gold Bug Variations*, (Professor Stuart Ressler) as a tribute to him.

Taylor is a typical English professor who influences students with his wide reading, timely assistance, and command of English language and literature. This is an example of an old-generation, ideal teacher-student relationship (of the 1970s and 80s) where the teacher is a model and the best source of knowledge and inspiration. Richard later finds the trend changing to mere professionalism, in the following decades.

The reason for Richard's shift in discipline was not Taylor's influence alone. He had developed a voracious interest in reading, right from his childhood. He had read many classics far ahead of his age, "Homer in fourth grade. Shakespeare in sixth…" etc. (228). He didn't have much idea of what they meant then. But he found a passion for the mere pleasure of reading which tailored his imagination. He was inclined to poetry and wrote some when he was young, and later shifted to fiction. It was his natural taste for aesthetics that made him a man of letters.

The immediate reason for his turn from physics to English literature was the excessive specialization of the sciences which began to destroy his idea of holistic knowledge. He hoped to find solace in literature, which he then thought, will provide a better and fuller sense of life and the world. However, the disciplinary study of literature did not satisfy him. Richard encountered limitations of the institutionalized study of literature, at the cost of what is real and delightful about it. The whole academic practice turned out to be *about* literature, —prosody then, Theory now. Richard illustrates

this with an example from his graduate experience: while discussing Edwin Arlington Robinson's sonnet 'How Annandale Went Out,' "We'd been at the iambs and trochees for a good two hours before it struck me that no one had yet mentioned that the poem was about euthanasia. . . . the *study* [emphasis added] of literature would lead no further than its own theories about itself." (64). Ergo, though he had secured high-enough scores to pursue a PhD, flouting disciplinary parochialism, he decided to quit U. and chose to make a living as a computer programmer.

Richard worked on computer codes at night and read books during daytime, irrespective of genres and topics. He fed himself with essays, biographies, histories etc., ranging from literary figures like Rabelais and Balzac to writers of his choice, such as Freud, Henry Adams and Max Planck; "things that would never in a million years be on the List [of English literary canon] because they weren't *English* or weren't *literature*" (emphasis added) (95-96). "[He] read at random, obeying only the forgotten principle of pleasure" (66). Thus, he compensated the delight of reading at one's own will, which the syllabus-bound, disciplinary study of literature had taken away from him. He records those days as the richest period in his life. During one of his visits to Italy, he took a crash course in Italian so that he could read Italian classics of Boccaccio, Collodi, Levi etc in original. Richard recalls the evolution of his writing career as "a happy accident" (117). His bond with books is evident in the narration of the novel too. He marks the flow of time with the release of his books, as if they are years: For example, "All this happened two books ago" (227) and proudly pronounces, "[m]y books are my children" (227).

Years later, Richard returns to U. at the age of thirty-five, as an accomplished author and visiting faculty. Interacting with the students of the English Department at his alma mater, he realized the unpleasant fact that "the age of reading was dead." (116). Having known that he is a writer of fiction, some students have asked short-cuts about his writing career: "How do you work? Where do your ideas come from?" (117). They hoped that he would give them some tips and leave the class. He observed that the problem with many of the students was not language, but the sense of reality (or lack of it). They didn't think literature as an expression of lived experiences but as an ivory tower business. For them, it was just a subject of study and an artifact of imagination which had no real-world referent.

Richard had been walking down the same institute where he did his Masters. But the academia was no longer the same. People were struggling to ace academic competitions—not out of genuine interest or hard work, but for prestige or just to escape embarrassment. They were busy improving their credentials with publications and seminars. The only active space he found in the literature circles was (not the library, of course, but) the computer lab where the students are busy preparing their assignments. He sensed a fearful aggressiveness among them which blocked normal, sensible discussions. Literature, being the paradigmatic humanities subject, has somehow seemed to have lost what is inherently 'humane' about it. As people often criticize, conversations, if at all, seemed 'commonsense made complex' via clichés and jargons. Richard finds it tragic that the whole academic business lacks a common, communicable language that is inherently human. He

realized that, just like the economic gulf that is increasingly widening with every single 'development,' the gulf between the informed and the common man is also ironically enlarging with the advancement of higher education, especially with state of the art specializations.

Richard wonders at the changes that have occurred in the field over a decade. The alarming superiority of Theory over what he thought 'pure literature' displeased him. The whole business of the discipline seemed the hustle and bustle of tropes in critical theory. He remarks:

> Criticism had gotten more involuted while I was away. The author was dead, the text-function a plot to preserve illicit privilege, and meaning an ambiguous social construction of no more than sardonic interest. . . . Most were peach-fuzzed posthumanists, pimply with neo-Marxist poststructuralism. They wielded an ironic sophistication. (191)

Richard notices another important issue precipitated by this trend—the growing concern over the uncertainty of the discipline itself. "Pure panic that the world didn't need them anymore" (191). An 'anxiety of obsolescence' (to recall Kathleen Fitzpatrick) lurked the Department. "Maybe the whole discipline is breaking up . . . no one seems to know quite what they want the thing to become anymore" (255).

The conversation between Richard and A. reveal their respective ideas about English literature. She complains a lot about the Departmental affairs: the pointlessness of preparation, lack of job opportunities, struggle to obtain a PhD, the hierarchy and politics

that rule the Department etc. Her disappointment is evident in her outrage:

> Total chaos. . . . All that hot new stuff, the pomo [postmodernism] and cultural studies and the linguistic-based solipsism. I'm fed up with it. It's all such verbal wanking off. Frankly, I no longer give a fuck what happens to Isabel Archer. Neither politically, economically, psychologically, structurally, nor posthumanistically. (255)

Powers wondered at her disillusionment with something that he valued a decade back. His concept of education was different. Furthermore, career was not a priority over his love for literature. He didn't make a profession out of his graduation in English literature (though later he became a writer). Things are quite different for the new generation. The nostalgia associated with literature is an old-story now. He felt himself a misfit and outsider in the same field he belonged to. The whole discipline appeared mere verbal dynamics—read, speak and write. Most often, the worthiness of the English Department is measured in terms of perceivable metrics such as how effectively it could train students to perform well at interviews. In short, education is to get a well-paid job. It's no more about the passion for reading or writing which, according to the young students, cannot make a living up to their standards and expectations. Richard finds that the professionalism in the academia has become more utilitarian and corporate-friendly than as a system for seeking knowledge *per se*.

A. checks the list of literary texts Richard prepared to train Helen —the syllabus from Caedmon to Richard Wright which was

based on Richard's a decade-old Master's program that mirrored canonical English literature. To his disappointment, she dismisses his valued six-pages of titles as "a culturally constructed, belated view of belle letters" (285). "Has she [Helen] read the language poets? Acker? Anything remotely working-class? Can she rap? Does she know the Violent Femmes? . . . do tell her a little about what people really read (284)," she plays a role reversal of the student-teacher duo. "You make it sound as if everything anyone has ever written is recycled Bible and Shakespeare. . . . Whose English? Some eighty-year-old Oxbridge pederast's? The most exciting English being written today is African, Caribbean—" (285). She pointed out the "postnational" (Jay 33) trend in the discipline, highlighting the importance of non-British literatures in English.

A. vehemently criticized Richard's literary understanding as elitist, essentialist, patriarchal and Eurocentric. She uprooted his idea of literature as primitive and outdated, calling him a throwback with bankrupt ideas because he sides with the "aestheticism that favors privilege and power" (Powers 285). He tried to justify that he was not privileging anything but making simple observations. But for her, every response is political and every observation is loaded with ideological components. She denounced him as what Michel Foucault calls the 'author function,' professing that everything depends on the way language constructs it; language varies from culture to culture; no system is central—neither science nor language; nothing is absolute i.e. everything is socially constructed hence subject to change and open to criticism. The two different answers given by Helen and A. during the Turing test provide ample evidence for their respective perspectives. While Helen presented a subjective

reading of the given lines from Shakespeare's The Tempest, A. gave a postcolonial and new-historicist critique of the given text.

A. defends her statements in a nutshell by saying, "I'm not trying to burn any books. I'm just saying that books are what we make of them. And not the other way around" (285). Moreover, the curriculum has no more been prescriptive and "[n]obody *has* to read anyone anymore." (284). It is the students who chose what texts to learn, and get them approved by the faculty— she revealed the shifts in methodology. It surprised Richard that it had become possible to get a PhD in English literature without reading what he considered the 'great works.'

In a way, critical theory has overshadowed (but not quite eclipsed) what is essentially 'literary' about literature. However, it is inevitable because, in a complexly multicultural and rapidly globalizing *post*-postmodern technocratic world, the text-centered approach without considering the contexts and co-texts would be pedantically myopic. When the discipline becomes inclusive on one side, it is dissolving itself into the more fashionable 'Cultural Studies' on the other side. While some consider this a progressive move, others find it threatening as it shakes the existence and autonomy of literature as an independent academic discipline.

Eventually, Richard acknowledged that the distinction between the so called 'highbrow' or traditional and the 'lowbrow' or popular cultures has been melting; and, what hitherto was considered inappropriate as a cultural artifact has been becoming part of the discipline. He trend-surfed discourses such as social constructivism, linguistic determinism and so on. However, he views

that such theories alone will not be sufficient to get a whole picture of phenomenal experience. Because, he felt that they sometimes create misconceptions of reality which may lead to blind belligerence and dilettantism (as famously critiqued by Alan Sokal and the like). Therefore, Richard, as Powers in disguise, advocates a synergy of both traditional ideas and current discursive theories in order to get a better appreciation of literature and life. Thus presenting the fictional depiction of a cross-section of contemporary English departments, *Galatea 2.2* aptly qualifies for the label of what Jeffrey Williams calls an 'academic novel' ("The Rise").

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What it Means to be a Woman: An Exploration of Feminism in the Poems of Marge Piercy

Sandhya Gopal

Poet, novelist, essayist-that's what best describes Marge Piercy. Marge Piercy was born in Detroit, Michigan on March 31, 1936.Having won a scholarship to the University of Michigan, she was the first in her family to attend college. Later she earned a master's degree from Northwest University. Her first book of poems was "Breaking Camp" which was published in 1968.An indifferent student in her early years, Marge Piercy developed a love for books when she came down with rheumatic fever in her early childhood and could do little but read. She is Merlin of sorts who has crafted almost fifteen books of poetry, fifteen novels, one play, and one collection of essays, one non-fiction and one memoir. Her works cover a multitude of spheres including history, politics, contemporary life, eroticism, feminism, Judaism and much more into the arc of her universe. Piercy is dedicated to exploring the intersects of ideology and aesthetics by way of Marxist, Feminist and environmentalist strains of thought. She is an unpretentious Merlin, her black hair worn Cleopatra style despite her sixty four years

Percy Shelley had once said "Poets are the emotional state more sensitive to feelings, emotions and ideals and they colour all of them with divine colours of imagination". Marge Piercy adds "One of the functions of poetry has always been to stimulate and dignity to people's experience, their sufferings, their pleasures and dreams of lives". Piercy deals with her poems in such a way that anyone can identify with her poetry. Piercy says that her poetry allows her to exercise her autobiographical impulses. Yet she herself deviates by opining that 'When you are writing apoem,it isn't intimate .Your ego isn't engaged .Though I work with the material from my Life, it's as if it were clay or molten ore".Most of her works focus on women's lives. "The Moon is Always Female" (1980) is considered a feminist classic.Piercy received the Golden Rose award in 1990 which is one of the oldest poetry award.

Marge Piercy explores the aspects of feminism in most of her poems. "The Women in The Ordinary" and "What are Big Girls Made of" deals with the same. In both the poems she succeeds in establishing a strong picture of a beautiful woman and affirms the fact that women are beautiful in their natural and unaltered form. Shetries to highlight the positivity of such women no matter how they are viewed by others. To drive home this point she with the help of similes compares some parts of women to desirable aspects of the world and others to negative aspects to show the mind-set of the society which thinks such qualities to be beautiful. Piercy even opens the poem "What are Big Girls Made of' with a shocking denial that a woman is a human being at all, but altered to an unrecognisable form to please the society. She tries to show that

only those women are considered to be perfect who fit into the perfect mould set by society.

She also employs extensive imagery to show the readers what are those qualities that make a woman beautiful. Piercy uses the eighteen century French fashion to show the overly altered woman which leads to nothing but pain.

"Here is a woman forced into shape

rigidexoskelton torturing flesh:

a woman made of pain"

This harsh imagery of exoskelon is a negative one. She uses it to emphasise through connotation that this state is not something a woman desires and women are more beautiful when left alone than tampered with to fit societies' mould of beauty.

In "The Women in the Ordinary" Piercy portrays a woman who is anything but ordinary. The speaker in the poem refers to herself as "pudgy and downcast girl "The poem thus presents the picture of a woman who is healthy and lively but is unfortunately stuck in a fake shell. The speaker wants to break open the shackles that bind her down and show the world what true beauty actually means. The poet wants to make clear the idea that a woman is interesting or beautiful when she is free from the constraints of the social standards of beauty. She illustrates this by the use of natural elements such as spices in these lines.

"In her bottled up is a woman peppery as curry,

A yam of a woman of butter and brass,

Compounded of acid and sweet like a pineapple,

Like a handgrenade set to explode,

Like a goldenrode ready to bloom".

Thus a reader feels a certain connect with the description of this woman and infers that she is beautiful and should never be afraid to show her body.

Marge Piercy's poem "Barbie Doll" examines the iconic image of the Barbie doll and the meaning it implies. The toys gifted to a girl child are symbols of feminism that the family wants the child to internalise. It indirectly represents the kind of work a woman is supposed to learn such as the art of cooking, ironing etc. At the same time she should also look beautiful and conform to the social standards of beauty. 'Lipsticks the color of cherry candy' were provided to the girl child to look pretty, enhance her sexuality and thus cover any flaws she had. "Barbie Doll" is thus a mockery of social appearance and acceptance. It attacks the perspective of the corporate America, embodied by Barbie makers and Mattel toys that gives birth to female desires to look a certain way thus participating in our patriarchal system perpetuating gender stereotypes. The Barbie doll, one of the bestselling toys of all time, symbolises the need to have physical qualities that fit a certain prototype.

"A Work of Artifice "is about the social conditioning of women to live a limited life.The poem deals with the limitations and restriction placed upon women by the society that turns them into bonsais.The bonsai tree stands for a myriad of things.It represents the oppression of women and the restrictions imposed uopon them that stop them

from achieving their true potential.Artifice suggests cunning devices used for deception.The society deceives them of their freedom and keep them confined within cages thus preventing them from flying.Their freedom becomes a challenge for the dominant male mindset.

Marge Pircy proudly describes her as a feminist.She says that she is so as she was born a woman.When asked to describe herself Piercy chooses the word 'poet' and 'novelist'.Throughout her poems she deals with the question what it means to be a woman?

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Falstaffian Vision in Select Works of V.K.N

- Vijayalakshmi V.

Harold Bloom considers Falstaff as the most intimate link between the playwright and the comedic genius. In defining the genial stuff of celebrated Malayalam writer V.K.N – V.K. Narayanankutty Nair- the mock heroic *langue* in his writings, *Aarohanam, Syndicate and Pithamahan* happen to be the structural link to his comedic identity. An amazing Falstaffian presence in V.K.N is neither an influence nor impression of deep reading of Shakespeare, but an original, spontaneous occurrence and a respectable aesthetic accident. Lionel Trilling in his essay on Freud reports Freud's statement that discovery of the unconscious was made by the artists of the past centuries, before he started analytical exploration of human mind. It is the spirit of the time that generates such revolutions, breaking the hidden molecules of existence. Falstaff was such a revelation, a brain infested with naughty lingual intelligence and endearing wit, his genealogical anarchy and love for the absurd striking roots in *'Id'*, before Freud was born to christen the unconscious by that name. The comic hero in V.K.N strikes root in the terrain of embarrassing absurd after Freud established the ways *'Id'* behave. An amazing conjunction of cynical ,sarcastic wit and the seminal blood of amoral or immoral anarchy constructs the *langue* common for V.K.N's mock epics and the Elizabethen mock - hero, Falstaff.. Falstaff the huge patriarchal tongue of all ad

absurdum, and V.K.N's mock heroic personages are both embedded perhaps not in the personal *id*— a concept defined by Jung- but in the racial and collective unconscious of two distinct polities, one occidental and the other oriental . The two distinct *paroles* of the two authors can have two distinct identities, but the *langue,* sustained beneath the *paroles* is common, constituted by structures of feeling that reveal the confounding absurd in existence. Abstraction of the *langue* with its components from the two distinct diachronic *paroles,* one confronting with the political economy of occidental feudal monarchy and the other with the political economy of the oriental capitalist monarchy—ironically transplanted from the west— is the objective of this project.

In Tradition and the Individual Talent, Eliot argues that works drawn from two distinct points of time and space are scrutinized in a comparative plane not for judging the merit or demerit of the works by comparison. When such two relevant works of different specimens of time and space are put together they are measured by each other. Here the omnipotent patriarchal figure of Falstaff and the mock heroic commandants of VKN are scrutinized side by side not to establish the grand superiority of the towering genius of the west or the unconditional inferiority of the Indian writer. They are put side by side, as hut ,mansion and house are put together in the linguistic diagnosis of the signified. The signified of a signifier is determined by the associative signifiers lying side by side. So a similar text or texts drawn from a posterior century may determine the signified of a text anterior to it in time and space and vice— versa. It is a reciprocity admitted by Eliot at another level and despite

the synchronic prescriptions, it is the inter-textual relativism admitted in New Historicism also.

Comedy in ancient poetics was supposed to represent the ludicrous and so estimated as an inferior variety of writing insufficient to explore the grave, absurd crises of existence. Shakespeare experimented different levels of the ludicrous in his plays by which he realized the potentials of the comic absurd that lies beneath the marvelous heroic interpretations of human potentials. Malvolio, a dark ridiculous figure generated a mixture of humour and pathos representing un-heroic thin absurdity that rounded the dream deciphered as life. The fool in *King Lear* was a wise travesty within the play stained in tragic humour. The romantic comedies generated simple humour out of accidents and coincidences but never journeyed to the intensity of the absurd that is embedded in human destiny.

Romantic is a of course antithetical to concept of comic. A romantic hero is raised above the plane of common humanity by virtue of heroic acts, attitudes, and handsome figurative expressions. Romantic heroes are idealized figurative characters who perform acts of valour for guarding the rights of common humanity and to redress their values in peril. So in contrast to the romantic figurative character the comic agent of action is placed below average humanity as caricature and distorted figurative expression . The comic laughter is produced out of deformity at the physical, intellectual or psychological level. whereas the admiration for the romantic hero is brought out of specific ornamental qualities of exorbitant bravery and moral ideals. When it comes to tragedy, the

romantic hero assumes certain degree of gravity dealing with momentous issues that are social, moral and political. When Aristotle defined art of poetics, he ignored the romantic majesty alien to the classicist gravity of feeling and defined serious art in unromantic terms and made a distinction between tragedy and comedy at another level. In *Poetics* it is plainly stated that comedy deals with agents of action who are inferior to common level of humanity. Satires and lampoons were admitted as accountable works but not as respectable forms of imitation. They were meant to criticize and correct the follies alive in social life but they were not supposed to dig deep into the problematic space of existence. He estimated tragedy as superior form of art and installed tragic hero in the pedestal of superior agent of action. But Falstaff the comic superior in Shakespeare as well as comic superior in VKN's mock epics outwits the tragic heroes as they dig deep to the tragic bottom of existence and enjoy nothingness and moral vacuum excavated, enjoy the glorious festivity of anarchy . The 17th century classification of comedies consider comedies as theatrical forms that do not cut deep into the vanities beneath the skull. But modernism and post modernism raised comedy to the level of penetrating steel equipped with grand irony and black humour. A character like Leopold Bloom lost in psycho expeditions, parodies the mythical Ulysses and generates an absorbing interpretation of existence commanded by absurd drives. Even centuries before such a dimension of comedy revealed itself. Shakespeare could cultivate a comic character that launched an aggressive word combat against the values of feudal monarchy. Falstaff emptied disturbing criticism against the political dishonesty and pseudo morality enshrined in the political economy

of Elizabethan era. Apart from it Falstaff could interpret honour, as mask for absurd pride and murderous vanity . A cynical anarchic hedonistic vision emerges in a situation of political and moral unfaithfulness.

Though *Henry IV* part I and II deal with the ascension of Prince Hal , Falstaff fills the central philosophical space of the play in which expediency of *order* .is set opposed to the ill bred honesty of *anarchy* .Falstaff is a character whom we both laugh with and laugh at. Even his name invites humour as it is a sort of pun on impotence. He is a Homeric burlesque and iconoclast of philosopher and paradox. Falstaff a character of mock epic dimension is an ethical and political character figure, that explores the vacuum of the monarchical political system as well as general human existence. V.K.N in Malayalam Literature constructs a Falstaffian political expanse which unveils the absurd in modern political economy as well as in general human existence. V.K.N was a path breaking and celebrated Malayalam writer, noted mainly for his sharp ironic texture of writing. Apart from novels, he wrote short stories and political commentaries. A native of Kerala in South India his works are considered distinctive for their multi-layered humour, trenchant criticism of the socio- political classes uncanny ability to twist the meanings of words contextually, thus lend a touch a magic to his language.

Shakespeare's plays particularly deep tragedies cultivate a vibrant. Criticism of feudal monarchy glorified by sacrificial valour, honour and religious commitment. The deep tragedies *Hamlet, King Lear* and *Macbeth* expose the tyranny of murderous nothingness

fuelled by the strife of ambition. The tragic futility of war and all such murderous grapppling with power dismantles all structures of filial, conjugal and familial ties, Shakespeare's Falstaff, a huge mass of flash, a liar thief and burglar of all morals, is patriarch of anarchy and freedom who records strong dissent with the martial art of futility that sustains monarchial power. The values cultivated by the system of political economy make a futile attempt to manipulate the absurd that is embedded in the natal existence of man. Critics find contradiction of nature and nurture in the composition of Falstaff and Falstaff like VKN 's mock epic heroes exploit all such exercises of nurture and artifices of values ,. Harold Bloom considers Falstaff and Hamlet as two antithetical ends. Falstaff representing the self satisfying urge and Hamlet delivering the self loathing instinct — even death instinct as later deciphered by Freud.

Life demonstrated in the idiom of absurd is the common factor that brings close the Falstaffian grand metaphors of food, drink, sex and linguistic subversions to the mock narratives of V.K.N, A.C. Bradley observes that the philosophical attitude that determines the character of Falstaff as *that to reduce a thing at absurd on, is to reduce to nothing and walk about free and rejoicing*. V.K.N's characters reduce the values of capitalist political economy to dust and exposes the absurd beneath the glory of its morals, such as ahimsa, tolerance, equality, fraternity and honour of the nation. The political idealism and ideology upon which the representative democracy is constructed is blasted reduced to sarcastic laughter. As Falstaff ,whether it be the comic antihero Payyans or the Great Grandpa Sir Chathu Nair, the hero with reckless guts of brain reduces everything to nothing and walk about free and rejoicing. The raging

humour that nurtures the joy and freedom of anarchy is the common terrain where Falstaff and the characters of V.K.N survive and sustain immortality.

Falstaff in *Henry IV* and *Henry V* is a distinct phenomenon a roaring conquest of negative wisdom but Sir John Falstaff in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, is not even a shade of that intrigue in the conquest of intelligence and emotions. To measure the depth, gravity, and philosophical range of V.K.N, ,Falstaff in king Henry Chronicles are relied upon and Sir John Falstaff in Merry Wives of Windsor is no match to a comparative measure and magnitude.

V.K.N. literature interacts with the dishonesty of the capitalist political economy that breeds hollow tropies of tolerance, equality, fraternity, freedom and such other items of political morality. Adler, Jung and Nietsche consider urge for power and not sex as the basic instinct of man. So in every system of political economy whether it be feudal monarchy or capitalist democracy the instinct for power reigns supreme and it subverts and nullifies all such morals and ideological concepts that construct every distinct system of political economy. Certain hegemonic value statements are enshrined in the minds of the people and the people are subservient to such hegemonic expressions. In Elizabethan monarchy, honour was such a hegemonic creed which meant honour of the nation, honour of religion and honour of women. Falstaff considers the construct of honour as an expression of, arrogance and vanity. One dies for the nation, one dies for the honour of woman or the honour of religion because he is pompous and vain . This is exemplified by the heroic sacrifice of Hotspur, the reflection of *super ego* and thus the antithesis to Falstaff

. In the present Indian context, Indian nationalism is defined by certain values, such as Ahimsa, self suffering, search for truth, and compassion. These are all hegemonic statements drawn out from tradition expanded to make profit out of political power. V.K.N's characters 'Payyans' as well as 'Pithamahan' reveal the hollowness of such hegemonic impositions and revolts against the system by the expressions of anarchic freedom. The Epicurean hedonistic arguments of V.K.N's characters rejoicing in the freedom of anarchy find their closest ally in Falstaff who enjoys a similar freedom of anarchy. One feels a direct Falstaffian presence in V.K.N's characters as they estimate values and such as honesty, faithfulness and political morality as void and perceive them as ironical part of the absurd game that is politics .

An impressive factor that conjoins Falstaff and V.K.N's characters is the carnival aspect explicit in the detestable drama of life haunted by political excesses. Mikhael Bhaktin in his theory of carnival concludes that a carnival in its design and intention is set to subvert the political hierarchy in a social place. In a carnival a king takes the role of a slave or the dwarf fool plays the role of ruler; the hierarchy is upset; the pseudo social moral codes of conduct are stripped in public. This is the way people reject the supreme political power structure that deceives their daily life. Carnival performance that violates the moral and political codes of context is an expression from the collective unconscious of people repressed under the power structure. Michael Bristol and Valerie Traub make a carnivalesque reading of Falstaff just to establish the passion of rebel that lies subdued in the anarchic freedom and pleasure enjoyed by the huge character of flesh.. Coming to V.K.N the reader is impressed by

the way he upset the political hierarchy by subverting the linguistic formalities and decorative and ornamental expressions of language attributed to the ruling ones. The total system of *rule* —as conceived by Gramsci— and the hegemonic alliances are dethroned in the anarchy of words and utterances set upside down. Words come out as in a procession lifting the crowns unveiling the deformities and distortions of ruling personages stripping them naked in daylight as objects of obscene pleasure. In V.K.N's novels *Arohanam, Syndicate,* and *Pithamahan* which gain mock epic dimensions when put together as a trilogy, certain incidents of heritage, create carnival impact. The way V.K.N narrates the demonstration of the nude sanyasins in front of the Parliament house itself is a carnivalesque presentation of history

In V.K.N ,one feels a powerful Falstaffian presence in the linguistic exercises, quibbles, word combats, morphemic twists, phonemic distortions, inter-textual suggestions, parodies, multi-lingual inflections, and other lingual variations by which the author creates a species of language that suggests disorder against order, anarchy and *'archy'*. The word games and the multilingual exercises are the genuine asset that defines Falstaff's soul and flesh and V.K.N's multilingual exercises and excesses prove that the Falstaffian spirit is reborn in yet another political and historical context.

The similitude of carnival and anarchy is amazing but when viewed as a measure to undermine the sociopolitical system of the corresponding periods the similitude is rationally justified. Joshua. B Fischer considers expansive metaphorical significance of Falstaff in the form of food imagery and native English. Gluttony a stock

comic feature in the tradition of art is a major philosophical metaphor in V.K.N and in the character construct of Falstaff. Food, wine and women are enjoyed and V.K.N feels moral pain or sexual angst but on rarest occasions. Females make use of sex as device to win power for their male partners with no scruples as they are victims of the fanaticism of power. But with restrained emotional attitude Payyans of V.K.N take the slum girl in his lonely memories. The philosophy of life preached by Falstaff is biblical to V.K.N's characters as they don't have petty sentiments. Wit and penetrating intelligence subdue the emotive current and a boisterous laugh marks the perspective by which life perturbed by the political instruments of *rule and hegemony* is measured.

The present topic is a reciprocal assessment of V.K.N Literature represented by the mock epic political trilogy—*Syndicate, Arohanam and Pithamahan* and Falstaff in *King HenryIV, King Henry V, and Merry Wives of Windsor*. It is not a formal comparative study but an attempt to demonstrate how two writers of two different periods and space responded to their systems of political economy. One is measured by the other and the similitude of vision and response equally inform and interrogate each other.

Representing a Sense of Estrangement in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*

Akhila Sara Varughese

In the aftermath of World War II, colonies of the British Empire started to battle for their independence. India obtained independence in 1947, and other colonies followed quickly. A consequence of this worldwide decolonization trend was the influx of West Indian and Afro Asian immigrants into the former mother country. The presence of these and other settlers from former colonies brought about changes in British society at the cultural, social, and political level.

The presence of foreigners in the country and the changes this caused socially coincided with the rise of British Cultural Studies. In this field of study, British scholars and academics began to pay attention to this social phenomenon and started to take into account the notion of black people in Britain. A pioneer in this regard was Stuart Hall, who brought about "the systematic engagement of 'race' and the Black presence within cultural studies… in the 1970s and the early 1980s (Owusu 2). Moreover, Hall's work opened up new dialogues on black cultural identity; effectively challenging the notion that British culture was quintessentially 'white'" (Owusu 3).

With regard to the term 'black', the extent of this notion is variable among different scholars. For Stuart Hall, the term is to be applied to groups and communities with, in fact, very different histories, traditions and ethnic identities" (Hall 223). Furthermore, Hall emphasizes the diversity implied by the term:

> What is at issue here is the recognition of the extraordinary diversity of subjective positions, social experience and cultural identities which compose the category 'black'; that is, the recognition that 'black' is essentially a politically and culturally constructed category which cannot be grounded in a set of fixed trans-cultural and transcendental racial categories and which therefore has no guarantees in Nature. What this brings into play is the recognition of the immense diversity and differentiation of the historical and cultural experience of the black subjects (225).

The immigrants had to reconsider their cultural affiliations and consciously decide to what extent they were to assimilate into the British lifestyle or its preserve aspects which belong to their original culture. Bhabha explains that "terms of cultural engagement whether antagonistic or affiliative, are produced per formatively, and hereby emphasizing the conscious choices immigrants have to make in their new environment. The performance of cultural affiliation affects the immigrants' position towards their homeland, original culture and ethnicity."(30)

Zadie Smith was born in North London in 1975, as the daughter of a working class English father and Jamaican mother. While a student, she began a manuscript for the novel that would become *White Teeth*; and in a fairy-tale experience found a literary

agent after submitting little more than a single chapter. *White Teeth* created quite the anticipatory buzz, and Smith published the novel in 2000 and rose to instant acclaim.

White Teeth follows the lives of three families after the diaspora of Great Britain's colonies in the 1970s and narrates the effects of living in a multicultural community. The present study focuses only on first two families. One family is comprised of a middle aged, working class man, a young Jamaican, former Jehovah Witness woman, and their racially mixed daughter. The other consists of two working class Bengali, Muslim immigrants and their twin sons, one who is an atheist and the other a Muslim fundamentalist. The third family is comprises of two middle class, Caucasian scientists and their three sons. The mixture of socio-economic, cultural, and religious beliefs between all three characters leads to many conflicts, most of them controversial in nature.

The novel, *White Teeth,* with its North West London setting, presents a multiracial, multicultural society with immigrants from different cultural and religious background. This paper focuses on the portrayal of the conflict between first and second generation characters in *White Teeth*. The first generation characters in the novel represent the immigrants who leave their homeland and migrate to another country for seeking jobs. The second generation can no longer consider their parents' homeland their home country. Since they were born and raised in Britain, their affiliation with the country of origin is even more complicated than their parents. The study shows that problem faced by second generation is more pathetic than that of first generation.

In the introduction to *Black British Culture and Society*, Owusu describes the situation of the second generation in contrast to that of their parents and emphasizes the problematic status of the notion of 'home' in immigrant families. "Unlike their parents, the second generation of black youth did not see themselves as 'temporary guests' of Her Majesty's government. They were not here to work and eventually return 'home' to the Caribbean or Africa. Britain was their home, and… they were 'Here to Stay!'"(9). The relationship of the second generation to Britain is very different from that of their parents, but, in its way, also problematic, due to the fact that the children of immigrants are not seen as straightforwardly belonging to the country in which they were born. Mostly regarded "as foreigners, as interlopers in the land of their birth" (Stein 42), the second generation immigrants experience particular and complex affiliations with Britain. Paul Gilroy describes the situation of second generation immigrants in England as follows: "the contemporary black English… stand between (at least) two great cultural assemblages" (439). On the one hand, this generation is influenced by their parents' culture and ethnic heritage; on the other hand, they grow up in a society with a wholly different predominant culture.

A conflict between parents' generation and children's generation is a naturally occurring fact that can be found in any society or any time and which is a consequence of continuously changing and developing lifestyle. In the case of immigrants the gap tends to be even more pronounced as the migrants of the first generation are, in terms, of lifestyle, considerably different from their white British contemporaries. However, it is the British way of life that partly shapes their children, thus widening the contrast between

them. As Smith says "a distance was establishing itself… between fathersons, oldyoung, bornthereborn here" (219). While the parents were forever acutely aware of being in another country, in exile, and they often dreamt of returning to their motherland, the children grow up with Britain being their home. Unlike the parents, for whom it is easier to stay away from British influences as they often live in communities and neighbourhoods of their immigrants and work in family businesses, the children are more exposed to British culture. In the work *Frontiers of Caribbean Life in English* the author says that they meet and mix with white children at school and grow up "with different cultural priorities and expectations from those of their parents" (Birbasingh Frank 50). Andrea Levy refers to this problem in her autobiographical essay "This is My England": "I wanted just to fit in and be part of everything that was around me, and there strange parents were holding me back."

Smith discusses the conflict between generations in an interview with Kathleen O' Grady. When asked about the connections between the generations in the text and the ways in which the children in *White Teeth* take on the uprooted feeling that their parents experience, Smith says that "…your roots come with baggage. And the baggage isn't always fun" (2). In *White Teeth* Smith further implies that it has been passed down to them from their parents. Sometimes this history feels like a heavy burden, like unwidely baggage to carry; but it is unavoidable because it is a part of who her characters are. Smith provides a useful metaphor of Russian dolls fitting into each other to help her readers work through the process of remembering and locating the past. This metaphor can be applied once again in this discussion of intergenerational

relations. Smith tells us "… if this story is to be told, we will have to put them all back inside each other like Russian dolls…"(356).

To the first generation of immigrants the assimilation of their children seems dangerous and worrying; in their eyes the children are being corrupted by British ways of life and are abandoning their traditions. In *White Teeth* these matters worry the "widespread Iqbal/Begum clan", raising questions:

> What was wrong with these descendants of the great ocean crossing experiment? Didn't they have everything they could want? Was there not a substantial garden area, regular meals, clean clothes from Marks' n' Sparks, A-class top-notch education? Hadn't the elders done their best? Hadn't they all come to this island for a reason? To be safe. Weren't they safe? (218-219).

This quote reveals original hopes and expectations that were the reasons for emigration- reasons largely economic and ensuring safety of the family; however these hopes did not involve melting into another culture and losing traditional values. The theme of disillusionment with the west is traceable throughout the novel *White Teeth*; the characters express their longing for the homeland, but are unable to return, like for instance Samad and Shiva in the restaurant:

> I don't wish to be a modern man! I wish to live as I was always meant to! I wish to return to the East!' 'Ah, well… we all do, don't we?' murmured Shiva, pushing the peppers and onion around the pan. 'I left when I was three. Fuck knows I haven't made anything of this country. But who's got the money for the air fare? And who wants to live in a

shack with fourteen servants on the payroll? Who knows what Siva Bagwhati would have turned out like back in Calcutta? Prince or pauper? And who', said Shiva, some of his old beauty returning to his face, 'can pull the West out of 'em once it's in?' (145)

While for most while British citizens, black immigrants meant a threat and were commonly perceived as being linked to, or indeed the reason of, increasing social problems and crime, the negative image was largely created by media and encouraged by public figures, such as politicians. In *White Teeth* we hear Millat sum up the typical sense of non-recognition, the hostile complaints that an immigrant has to endure from the host society.

> He knew that he, Milat, was a Paki no matter where he came from; that he smelt of curry; had no sexual identity; took other people's jobs; or had no job and bummed off the state; or gave all the jobs to his relatives; that he could be a dentist or a shop-owner or a curry-shifter, but not a footballer or a film maker; that he should go back to his own country; or stay here and earn his bloody keep; that he worshipped elephants and wore turbans; that no one who looked like Millat, or spoke like Millat, or felt like Millat, was ever on the news unless they had recently been murdered. In short, he knew he had no face in this country, no voice in the country (234).

The main reason for the emigration from Asia and the Caribbean to UK has to secure more prosperous and safe life for them. In *White Teeth*, the first generation Muslim immigrants from Bangladeshi; Samad and Alsana Iqbal, both have to come to terms

with their inner conflict of adaptation versus resistance. They are both 'split people' Samad acknowledges this state of mind by saying: "half of me wishes [to let] the things are beyond my control wash over me, [whilst] the other half wants to fight the holy war" (179). Alsana confirms this by bitterly saying "my husband fights the third world war every single bloody day in his head, so does everybody" (235). Samad declines assimilation as an option by claiming that has been corrupted by England: "I am corrupt, my sons are becoming corrupt…I don't what is happening to our children in this country" he says, and takes Alsana's sisters as an example:

> All their children are nothing but trouble. They won't go to mosque, they don't pray, they speak strangely, they eat all kinds of rubbish, they have intercourse with God knows who. No respect for tradition. People call it assimilation when it is nothing but corruption. Corruption! (190).

Samad's fear of assimilation makes him see everything British 'as a source of corruption' for him and his children's Bengali roots. For Samad "tradition was culture and culture led to roots" (193). Thus he tries to resist assimilation by picking ideological fights. An example of this is when he questions the celebration of the Pagan Harvest Festival.

As Laura Moss puts it, the first-generation immigrants are 'caught between a nostalgia for home', which represents their past, and a loathing for the future' (Moss, 16). Samad acknowledges this complex state of 'in-between [ness]' even before immigrating to Britain (McLeod, 247). Whilst in war, he asks himself:

> What am I going to do, after this war is over…Go back to Bengal? Or to Delhi? Who would have such an Englishman

there? To England? Who would have such an Indian? They promise us independence in exchange of the men we were. But it is a devilish deal (112).

Samad is thus unsuitable, he belongs 'neither here nor there'; he is too British for his country of origin, and too Indian for his country of immigration.

Samad even picks fights with his wife Alsana claiming that she ignores her 'own culture' or is not acting like a true 'Bengali'. Whereas Alsana confronts him with questions like: "my own culture? And what is that please? And what is a Bengali, husband, please? As a result, she looks it up in an encyclopedia and ironically discovers that 'Bengalis' are indeed descendants of the 'Indo-Aryans'. "It looks like I am Western after all", she says and concludes with a metaphor:

> It just goes to show, said Alsana, revealing her English tongue, 'you go back and back and back and it's still easier to find the correct Hoover bag than to find one pure person, one pure faith, on the globe. Do you think anybody is English? Really English? It's a fairy-tale! (236).

Through the words of Alsana we can clearly understand that the novel depicts the ambiguity of purity of the characters and thereby the one of Englishness.

Immigrant parents experience crucial difficulties or crises in a multicultural world; we can say that their children come through double entanglements. The second generation children born and brought up in a different country, nation, culture and history. The history and historical memory are significant as someone cannot have a healthy identity without knowing about her/his familial roots.

The historical consciousness is very important "for history is to the nation rather as memory is to the individual and an individual deprived of memory becomes disoriented and lost, not knowing where he has been or where he is going (Schlesinger 45-46). In the novel, the second generation children of Iqbals and Jones are frustrated for not having any familial history which could help them to belong to an origin or root. Irie, Archie's hybrid daughter sees her parents as hypocrites because they do not enlighten her with their familial history.

> To her, this was yet another item in a long list of parental hypocrisies and untruths, this was another example of the Jones/Bowden gift for secret histories, stories you never got told, history you never unraveled,…these parents were full of information you wanted to know but were too scared to hear. But she didn't want it any more, she was tired of it. She was sick of never getting the whole truth (379).

Living in a society "where 'white' ideas clearly predominate, causes a cultural and racial dis-ease for those who feel they are outside of the dominant system." (Thompson 136). Being forced to accept the British ways they compromise with their traditions but are still not accepted by the society. The immigrants can suffer the haunting feeling of having no real identity. They are discouraged by negative responses as they attempt to "com[e] to terms with the community where they seek to be at home, while acknowledging that community's reluctance to accommodate them," (Innes 26).The immigrants cease to belong to their original countries, and are not fully accepted in their new home, as aptly summarised by Samad in *White Teeth*: "what am I going to do? Go back to Bengal? Or to

Delhi? Who would have such an Englishman there? To England? Who would have such an Indian?" (119).

This problem can be even more acute with the second generation – children who were born in Britain, and therefore feel that they should fit the culture, but still experience a sense of estrangement. Unlike their parents, who at least had their identity formed by their homeland, these children grow up confused, caught between two cultures and two influences, and inevitably have to set on the quest of searching for hence they came and where they belong.

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Constructing Indian Intelligentsia : A Panoramic View of Stratified Post-Colonial Indian Community with Reference to G.B Shaw's *Pygmalion*

Anju Binukumar

We must do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, words and intellect.

Well, no doubt every learned and educated person is very much familiar with the above comment of Thomas Babington Macaulay. And without the slightest string of doubt we all agree that we have confirmed to the wishes of the Secretary of Governor General's Council. Macaulay with the concern of delivering 'useful learning', introduced English as a language from the sixth year of secondary schooling into the Indian Education system.

The colonized shattered India had to rest her head upon the foreigner's shoulder to escape the tag of barbarity of being Indian or oriental in all facets. The attempt to form a 'class'- English in taste and words left the post-colonial India with the deep intermixing with our blood itself. To match the race against the developing

economies we had to be subservient to the policies and educational frameworks set by our colonizers.

As Tagore said, we became the zombies of Macaulay, but without any opposition we do agree how it helped the post-colonial India to stand with the other developed and developing nations of the world. English is described as "the language of opportunity", but the assumptions that our society makes about the intelligence of a person based on the language he or she speaks can be problematic. This often occurs when people exclusively use English in social settings, as an indication of being refined or polished. The corollary is that non-English speakers are less 'cultured.' Like "Shashi", Sridevi's character in the movie **English Vinglish**. who has to face the disgrace due to her broken communicative English. She is degraded by her own children and her husband who think that she is not presentable enough in front of the society. Things get ruined when she opens her mouth. Her daughter hesitates to accompany her for the Parent Teachers' meeting in her school. Her husband fully berates her to the corner of the kitchen walls and feels she's worth being domesticated and making 'ladoos'. And there arises the crisis of the movie. The degraded protagonist has to pave her way to get accepted and survive in the modern society by enrolling herself to the English-Speaking coaching institute.

In the climax, she fixes her place amongst others by giving a toast of speech in her niece's wedding. This clearly propagates the idea that, to have a mark in the society you have to rise to the status bar by being proficient in the English language. Knowing a language and using it effortlessly, no doubt, is a matter of pride for a person.

But when it becomes a standard of measurement of your social affinity and elitism, the whole perspective takes a dangerous turn.

The social stratification that exists with respect to the language requires a more profound discourse. Few of us, realize that the elevated status we unthinkingly ascribe to one's competency in English. For instance, elders often insist on your speaking English with others because of the positive image it portrays. The *'look my son/daughter is so "well-educated"* syndrome.

While in most countries it is the norm to speak one's native language, irrespective of competency in English, but in India it can invite the assumption that either they do not speak English or they believe the other person does not know it. Moreover, given the sheer linguistic diversity of our country with over 700 languages, it is more likely that English as opposed to Hindi or the other regional languages will unite us.

It serves as the communicator among Indians who speak different language, the country being diverse in nature in terms of language, culture, cuisines, religions, etc., despite continued pressure from nationalists, English remains at the heart of the Indian society. It is widely used and therefore remains a common means of communication, both among the ruling classes, and between speakers of mutually unintelligible languages.

English firmly established itself as the language of administration and many educated Indians were demanding instruction in English as a means of social advancement.

And consequently, English is increasingly accepted as the language of government, of the social elite, and of the national press.

The 'modern' leaders of that era in India also supported English language and claimed it to be the main key towards success. Indians who knew good English were seen as the new "elite" of India.

The stress here is laid upon the 'class- tag' attached to this language, which is clearly represented through the metamorphosis of Bernard Shaw's cockney flower girl, Eliza Dolittle. He shows her not only as a person who completely violates the English language, but, more important, he shows her as a low, vulgar creature — totally without manners. What Shaw has done, is to let us listen to a flower girl who totally violates the English language and who is a total vulgarian in terms of language. This fictional character, who comes to Professor Henry Higgins asking for elocution lessons, after a chance encounter at Covent Garden, so that he can turn her into the toast of elite London society.

Doolittle receives voice coaching and learns the rules of etiquette. The change in Eliza's pronunciation will come about because of Higgins' lessons in phonetics who believes that the only requisite to being a member of the upper class is the way in which one speaks.

But the important change, and the real subject of the play, is the change that will come about in Eliza's manners. In his play, Shaw portrays Eliza as an English woman who is looked down upon by the society because of her dialect and occupation. And it is no exception to what many struggles with to understand Henry Higgins is a gifted linguist.

The above case of Eliza Dolittle forces us to draw a parallel with the class questions related to the acquisition of English language

in Indian community. Modern Indian parents do not take a chance of skipping general terms of communication in English to their little ones. Terms like "hello", "give me please", "excuse me" are being fed into a toddler's early communication system, so that they stand a chance of applause in front of their relatives and neighbours. Our behaviours and manners are adjudged on the basis of the communicative aspect of the language. And this somewhere proves the point, that why there are schools and institutes who distinguish themselves to stand apart from others by tagging themselves as national/international standards; public /private etc. Hence, the process of stratification starts at this level itself. Schooling of a child determines how well-mannered and socially sound that he/she would be later in life. If you send your child to the school of international standards where English is the only campus language, you have done your part. As we saw in the Malayalam movie , Salt Mango Tree (2015) and the later remake in Hindi, Hindi Medium (2017) shows the English spree of the young parents by choosing high profile schools for their children than government schools , moving to a posh locality to provide a better English learning atmosphere for their girl child.

So, the disparity begins at this point itself when one chooses a school for his/her child. The choice of school decides his/her place in the social ladder in coming years. The child now can be distinguished on his behaviour, mannerisms, and his social circle. He/she becomes the part of a particular section of the society that decides his future endeavours.

Throughout Pygmalion there is a connection between language and social status. When Prof. Higgins says: "You see this creature with her kerbstone English: the English that will keep her in the gutter to the end of her days. Well, sir, in three months I could pass that girl off as a duchess at an ambassador's garden party."

Eliza is referred as a 'creature' here by Higgins. She is not worthy of being called a person, as her language, her accent turns so hostile towards her being recognised in the society. Her current position is compared as of a gutter. She is being referred unclean in her words and communication. The refinement has to be done to elevate her from her menial position. She, in a way can be represented as the barbaric uncivilised Indians of Macaulay's period. Post-colonial India has struggled a lot to uplift themselves by learning the foreign language and good amount of homework has been done by them to reach this level.

But the problem arises, when we Indians try to push ourselves beyond the limit. We under the pretext of being a globalised power nation, are tending to forget our rich cultural past and proving Macaulay's claim that the Orientals cannot match with the abundance of Europeans in literature. As there tend to be the decline of Indianism in our behaviour, manners, literature and language.

We are hunting the schools and universities which focus on western style of teachings and learning for our children. The race to get admission in International schools is the biggest proof of this. It was our colonizers who wanted us to follow them, but now it has become our stubbornness to become exactly like them. More than learning English as a language, we are strictly making it our regime.

We are religiously following and doing whatever can be done to excel in mastering the language whether it's to get admission in high profile schools and colleges, getting enrolled in mushrooming Spoken English institutes, downloading the English learning Apps etc., And just remember, it is just for the pomp and show. To step up onto the ladder to become a fashionista, a trend setter, we are giving English a benefit to decide our place in the society. And thus, leading to a stratified society which already suffers with so many kinds of evil stratification whether religious, class, caste, power, wealth etc.,

In Pygmalion, Higgins creates a transformed Eliza but deprived of her individuality and pure soul. We also while creating our intelligentsia should remember that in a frenzy of making the learned fluent accented Indian community, we should not deprive us of the essence of being Indian. Schools and other educational institutions should not hamper our child's growth and development just by taking "English" as a factor determinant of their capabilities and intelligence. The purity of our souls should not be tampered by the tint of our blind faith in the superficiality of the English language. Knowledge of any kind never turns out to be a failure and we Indians have proved in many ways, that we have the capability and intelligence of mastering any language, any science or any art. But colonisation has taught us a lesson which we always need to remember that we have to stick to our grounds and culture and should not allow any kind of intrusion that will lead to the destruction of our soul and purity. 'Divide and Rule' has already left an incorrigible scar on our identities by our colonizers. So, we should not inflict ourselves with the same kind of division and stratification amongst us.

Through the critical study and analysis of *Pygmalion,* and the transformation of Eliza Dolittle to suit the dialect of the upper class strata, we can throw light upon the existing trend of the English language in our post-colonial Indian community, in the lives of our growing young population; Indian intelligentsia, suggesting the possible addition and reformation in the content of our present curriculum and education system by stressing on the fact that the purpose of language should be to facilitate communication, and not to stratify a society. Amidst the race to learn English, let's not forget that.

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Browning as an Advocate of the Obscure and the Unknown Realms of Eccentrics And Disabled.

Fathima Begum

Browning spent a major part of his childhood in a suburban village Camberwell that increasingly felt the changes associated with urbanization and industrialization. The effects of increasing population, of new modes of production, of spreading democracy and the dislocation of old value system were lived realities. But what really worried talented men like Browning was the nature of the reading public. 'The larger portion of the reading public…are indifferent to anything beyond being charmed, moved, excited, affected, and exalted'.

Browning was Tennyson's contemporary and drew upon a different, more scientific tradition that saw the mind as changing consciousness in a world of flux and drew upon the tradition of using the discordant sounds and vocabulary of spoken language.He experimented with various forms but his genius lay in the dramatic monologue. Browning was never a successful playwright but the phrase 'one of action in character' remains an accurate description of his dramatic monologues. Browning was experimenting with characters wholly unlike himself, allowing them to reveal the intricate

movement of their minds directly to the reader. It asks the reader to suspend his judgement even as it plays on the reader's sympathy. In many of his major dramatic monologues, it is this poetry of exclusion that Browning dramatizes.

A dramatic monologue is a poem in which an imaginary speaker addresses one or more listeners at a dramatic moment often exploring extreme and often morbid states of mind and goes beneath the surface impression given by his speaker to examine moral problems. In the dramatic monologue, a single speaker who was clearly not the poet was made to communicate to the reader a setting, a present action, and a sense of who was listening to the speaker. The act of speech that included arguing, pleading, informing, reminiscing, meditating aloud or justifying one self, remained the central action in the poem and itself conveyed the speaker's action. The action in a dramatic monologue is mental, psychological and verbal. The dramatic monologue allowed the poet to indulge in his fondness for eccentric and sometimes morally reprehensible characters. He stretches the confessional lyric mode to its extreme point. At times it is difficult to ascertain where lyric is displaced by drama, or where drama is dissolved into lyric. It is through Browning's medium length poems of human life, "My Last Duchess" and "Porphyria's Lover" that the nineteenth century is most objectified in pervading the dilemma within man's nature. Both its theme and its moral reflect the mainstream of Victorian thought.

Queen Victoria came to the throne in 1837 and reigned till the end of the century during which the period saw increasing urbanization, mechanization, collectivization, and accumulation of

financial power on the one side and a general decline of traditional attitudes and beliefs coupled with an increase in scientific scepticism, curiosity and discovery on the other. They opposed ruralisation to urbanization, individualism to collectivization, the spirit to animalism, imagination to rationalism and faith to scepticism. The poets through their confessional fragments seem to have sought less to understand their world than to understand themselves.

Victorians imitated some formal and stylistic aspects of romantic poetry by allowing too much play of the 'meddling intellect' to have the intuitive apprehension of reality. The intellect—cultivated consciously a clue to the understanding and awareness of the problems of the age. They felt the tremendous change taking place and the transition they were going through with the advancement of science and increase in scepticism. They developed the feeling that though important, it was impossible for man to know completely. And Darwin's theory only further complicated matters by bringing in theideas of evolution and the struggle for existence. The Victorians were not sure either of God or of God in man and so their problem was of knowing more and more of what was knowable—man as we see him in society, how humans could be and the need for social morality. This ferment and these changes affected imaginative literature and drove the poets of the age either inward to sensitive analyses of the individual's soul, or outward, to exotic nations. The variety of this catalogue implies completeness; surely no phase or feature of the outer natural world is without its appropriate counterpart in the inner world of human personality. Victorians wanted to hear voices and see visions and read meanings into the landscape. Nature then can be all things to all men. To purvey social

complexities in an imaginative form was reflected in Browning and such a relation was often dramatized

What was peculiar to the nineteenth century sensibility is that each central figure is ironic _ i.e., he in all is not all that he appears to be and is thus set at a distance from both the poet and the reader and much is left unsaid. Browning is a compound of longing and regret that we feel almost caught up in his character's dilemma. Each one is individualised, each is contemplated from the outside by both the poet and the reader but leaves untouched and unsatisfied certain regions of the soul.

Browning was experimenting with a middle class, democratic style of writing. He was following the footsteps of his literary godfather William Johnson Fox, who believed that poetry was the organ of social change. Not only should the subject-matter of poetry be modern, it had to be popular as well. Fox believed that the poetry explored psychological states of mind that drew upon experience based on life. The mind worked by a process of association connecting the data collected from the exterior world.

Browning placed the consciousness in a public context and saw poetry as pubic, masculine and rational. He felt the need to separate a man's poetry from his inner, personal life. He chooses those areas of private experience such as sexuality and religion, which are matters of intense privacy and therefore outside the jurisdiction of public morals. Hence, what makes Browning's poetry truly democratic is that it is open to interpretation and debate. Readers bring their own intelligence and imagination to a reading.

Browning's use of historical subjects was well suited to the dramatic form. Balzac and Stendal were the two European writers who influenced Browning and from whom he developed his fondness for irony for representing the complex psychological states as well as exploring the motivation of action rather than focusing on the action itself. It was from Stendal that he developed a keen interest in Italian culture and he absorbed its painting, sculpture and music, and rummaged through Italian libraries for renaissance history material which he used as background in his poetry to depict the part of the living experience of the character that is speaking.

"Porphyria's Lover" is Browning's first ever short dramatic monologue, and also the first of his poems to examine abnormal psychology but did not receive its definitive title until 1863. It was first published as "Porphyria" in the January 1836 issue of *Monthly Repository*. Browning later republished it in*Dramatic Lyrics* (1842) paired with "Johannes Agricola in Meditation" under the title "Madhouse Cells".

Dramatic Lyrics also had a lasting effect on Browning's personal life. Elizabeth Barrett, his disabled wife, admired the book. She met Browning and the two poets fell deeply in love, but Elizabeth's father, Edward Moulton Barrett, would not countenance any of his children marrying and leaving the home. On September 12, 1846 they were secretly married, and one week later they eloped to the Continent. In her 1844 poem "Lady Geraldine's Courtship" she expressed the esteem in which she held Browning by linking him to William Wordsworth and Alfred Lord Tennyson as one of the great poets of the age.

Browning wrote relatively little during the marriage, in part because the family frequently moved and, because of Elizabeth's frail health, he was usually busy making all the arrangements for housing and transportation. The Browning's had one child, Robert Wiedemann Barrett Browning, called "Pen," born in 1849.). Both parents doted on the boy, and Robert Browning took particular responsibility for his son's education—yet another diversion from poetic production apart from that of taking care of his disabled and weak wife. All these could also have triggered his interest to write on disabled and eccentrics of which he had first-hand experience.

In both "Porphyria's Lover" and "My Last Duchess", Browning uses the dramatic monologue to describe a man who responds to the love of a beautiful woman by killing her. Each monologue offers the speaker's reasons for the desired woman from subject to object: in "My Last Duchess", the Duke may have jealously murdered his wife, but keeps a portrait of her behind a curtain so none can look upon her smile without his permission; in "Porphyria's Lover", the persona wishes to stop time at a single perfect moment and so kills his lover and sits all night embracing her carefully arranged body., while

My Last Duchess was written in 1842. The material for the poem was gathered from his reading of Tasso during one of his many travels to Italy. A critic has described the poem as a brilliant short story in verse. In 'My Last Duchess', set in the Italian Renaissance, the woman's murder is at best implied. The Duke of Ferrara is addressing the envoy of the Count of Tyrol, the emissary of the family of his prospective new wife, a tour of the artworks in

his home. Although he is on his best behaviour, the Duke of Ferrara demonstrates many narcissistic tendencies. He draws a curtain to reveal the portrait of his late wife. He invites his guest to sit and look at the painting, recalling the time he shared with his now-deceased Duchess, stating that her happy, cheerful and flirtatious nature had displeased him. He says, "She had a heart – how shall I say? – too soon made glad..." He goes on to say that his complaint of her was that "'twas not her husband's presence only" that made her happy. Eventually, "I gave commands; then all smiles stopped together." This could be interpreted as either the Duke had given commands to the Duchess to stop smiling or commands for her to be killed. The painting of the Last duchess on the wall acquires a sinister meaning; her life has been snuffed only in order to give her the lifeless perfection of art. Even in death the Duke wishes to keep her painting hidden behind a curtain that only he is allowed to draw back where no other man could admire her beauty, meaning that now she only smiles for him. The Duke then resumes an earlier conversation so making his late wife but just another work of art.

A possible source for the poem "Porphyria's Lover" is John Wilson's "Extracts from Gosschen's Diary", a lurid account of a murder published in *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1818. Browning's friend and fellow poet Bryan Procter acknowledged basing his 1820 "MarcianColonna" on this source, but added a new detail that, after the murder, the killer sits up all night with his victim. The poem describes the feeling of perfect happiness a murder gives him and uses a somewhat unusual rhyme scheme, the final repetition bringing each stanza to a heavy rest betraying the madness of the speaker.

Porphyria's Lover is closer to a soliloquy than a dramatic monologue because of the absence of the silent listener in the poem.

In the poem, a woman's murder is described quite explicitly by the speaker and the clues given suggest that the persona's romantic egotism leads him into all manner of monstrously selfish assumptions compatible with his own longings, became jealous and commits the murder to win her for him alone forever.

Some critics are of the view that the lover might be impotent to satisfy the sexual urge of Porphyria as he calls himself 'one so pale / for love of her, and all in vain.' When the lady enters in the room, the lover does not feel excited. She cuddles with him and tells the social difficulties she has to face to meet him. He passively sits and never speaks a word to her. When she embraces him, he does not respond and no feeling of physical intimacy comes in him. He feels incapable of satisfying her sexual need even in such a romantic background. She says she loves him too much and the speaker realizes she worships him and feels that the exact moment of her embracing is priceless. To capture this perfect moment forever, the eccentric lover decides something strange.The speaker does not directly say that he is insecure in terms of her love, and to be sure and to possess her, he winds her golden hair three times around her neck and kills her,so as to not face his own defeated self.

He seems convinced that Porphyria wanted to be murdered, and claims "No pain felt she" while being strangled, adding, as if to convince himself, "I am quite sure she felt no pain." He may even believe she enjoyed the pain, because he, her lover, inflicted it. When she's dead, he says she's found her "utmost will," and when he sees

her lifeless head drooping on his shoulder, he describes it as a "smiling rosy little head", possibly using the word "rosy" to symbolise the red roses of love, or to demonstrate his delusion that the girl, and their relationship, are still alive. More likely, however, is the thought that blood returning to her face, after the strangulation, makes her cheeks "rosy." Her "rosy little head" may also be a sly reference to the hymen; Porphyria leaves a "gay feast" and comes in from the outside world wearing "soiled gloves"; now her blue eyes, open in death, are "without a stain".

In this poem, it is his indirect expressions and the way he handles the dead body of his beloved that reveals his psychological disorder and his mad mentality. Since the speaker may be insane, it is impossible to know the true nature of his relationship to Porphyria. Theories, some of them rather bizarre, abound. Porphyria might be the speaker's mother or sister or his former lover, now betrothed, or even married, to some other man. Some contemporary scholars suggest that the persona may be a woman. An incestuous relationship has also been suggested. She may even simply be some kind lady who has come to look in on him, or even a figment of his imagination.

In line with the persona's suggested weakness and sickness, some scholars take the word "porphyria" literally, and suggest that the seductress embodies a disease, and that the persona's killing of her is a sign of his recovery. Porphyria, which usually involved delusional madness and death, was classified several years before the poem's publication; Browning, who had an avid interest in such pathologies, may well have been aware of the new disease, and used it in this way to express his knowledge.

The persona may also be schizophrenic; he may be listening for a voice in his head, which he mistakes for the voice of God. It has also been postulated that this is not the gist of Browning's statement of "God's silence," in which neither good nor bad acts are immediately recompensed by the deity.The lover may also be a fetishist, indicated by the fact that he refers to her hair numerous times throughout the poem, and strangles her with it. He also refers to the "shut bud that holds a bee" which backs up the viewof it being a sexual fetish. The concentration and the irregularity of the pattern of the poem suggest the hidden madness of the speaker.

The mirrored effect produced by Porphyria's modelling of the persona in the first half, and the persona's reciprocal modelling of her after strangulation is indicative of a popular Victorian art form in which humans were used as art to recreate actual paintings. This is indicative of the allegorical content of "Porphyria's Lover" in which both characters imitate the process of artistic creation: when art is created or published, it is dead and forever unchanging. In the last few lines of the poem, Porphyria is manipulated in much the same way as the speaker was in the first few lines of the poem.

Crime is one aspect of the poem. The setting of the poem is quite violent. The violent nature outside has been juxtaposed with the violence lying inside the human psyche of a man and the dramatic lyric is used to explore this violence. At the beginning of the poem, the persona never moves; he sits passively in a cold, dark room, sadly listening to the storm until Porphyria comes through "wind and rain", "shuts the cold out and the storm," and makes up his dying fire. Finally, she sits beside him, calls his name, places his arm

around her waist, and puts his head on her shoulder; she has to stoop to do this. At the poem's midpoint, the persona suddenly takes action, strangling Porphyria, propping her body against his, and boasting that afterward, *her* head lay on *his* shoulder.

Another aspect is social attitude. The line, "God has not said a word!" stands for the explicit social attitude portrayed. The entire Victorian culture was based on the male perspective. So, even God becomes a part of the repressive culture. Nobody bothers to speak against this criminal activity and is hence sanctioned by the society. Despite his elaborate justifications for his act, he has, in fact, committed murder, and the final line may register the persona's sense of guilt over his crime, for which he expects God to punish him or, at least, to take notice. The persona is surprised, perhaps a little uneasy, at God's continued silence. God, here, may symbolically stand for the male dominated society where the murder of a lady is noticed, but no action is taken against it.

Hence, Browning's monologues are frequently voiced by eccentrics, lunatics, disabled or people under emotional stress. Their ramblings illustrate character by describing the interactions of an odd personality with a particularly telling set of circumstances. These speakers talk about the past incidents where they had committed a crime, but skillfully tried to hide their jealous feeling towards the dead one. But, however skillful they are to hide their sick psychology, they unknowingly reveal their crime and the reasons too through their advocate of obscurity-Browning.

Although the early part of Robert Browning's creative life was spent in comparative obscurity, he became, in his later years,

the Victorian sage—widely regarded for his knowledge and his explorations of philosophical questions of great resonance during Victorian life. His approach to dramatic monologue influenced countless poets for almost a century and at the time of his death, in 1889, he was one of the most popular poets in England.

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Transgressive Identities: Homosexual and Heteronormative Perspectives In Indian English Writings

Resuna M Rasheed

The term 'queer' is used to refer to the diverse forms of resistance to the heterosexual norm and queer theory focuses on the mismatches between sex,gender and desire. Queer theory emerged in the early 1990s and reflects on feminist ideas, on gender and on gay/lesbian studies in addition to close examination of sexual acts and identities. It mainly explores the contestations of the categorization of gender and sexuality.Queerness has been associated prominently with gay, lesbian and bisexual subjects, but its analytic framework also includes topics such as intersex bodies and identities, gender ambiguity and gender - corrective surgery. Thoughhomosexuality has been as old as human civilization, they have always been taken as aberrational behavior - unnatural to human society. The contemporary queer theorists and scholars focus on non-heteronormative sexualities. They have a belief in the real nature of an individual and that sexuality is related to the personality and not to the gender.

Queer sexuality in India has always been the favourite child of debate and discussions. Over the years, the representation of

queerness in Indian literary texts has acquired a unique space of its own.M.John and J.Nair in *A Question of Silence: The Sexual Economics of Modern India*addressed questions and anxieties when Western theories and literature are used. Why bring up Western theories at all? They responded that 'the west' is not only a particular geographical place but also a relation of complex domination or even hegemony, because 'we are effectively located in the west'. N. Menon in *Sexualities: Issues in Indian Feminism* asserts that though at an unconscious level South Asian feminists draw upon western theories, they still engage in a process of theorization of sexuality and sexual 'economics' through their own understanding of its relation in the experience of uneven modernity, set on its own socio-historical backdrop.He argues that Western culture has turned sexuality into a cultural construction, into a discourse that enables it to monitor us constantly and to exercise power.

Though in *History of Sexuality*Foucault claims that 'Sexuality based identity categories' originated in Nineteenthcentury Europe which did not exist before, Indian historians and queer scholarsSaleemKidwai and Ruth Vanita in their work *SameSexLoveinIndia: Readings from Literature and History*, argues that these discourses already existed in ancient India which can be explored through the uncharted territory of the Indian achieve on homoerotic love. They also argue that the new homophobia is the result of modern educated Indians fondness for Victorian ideals. For example, inancient Hindu epic, *Mahabharata,* Krishna and Arjuna are referred as "two Krishnas, developed their relation on the basis of friendship which goes 'beyond marriage and

procreation'. To Krishna, Arjuna is more important to him than wives, children or kinsmen, and therefore he cannot live without him (Vanita,2000) ". Hence, within Padma Purana, which is the third largest book in Sanskrit literature, after Mahabharata Arjuna transforms into a 'beautiful woman', named Arjunaî in order to experience the true nature of Krishna, to become one with him? Similarly Vishnu took the shape of a lovely woman, Mohini who is pursued by Shiva, despite being aware of Mohini'strue gender, which leads to the birth of Ayyappa, who is born out of a relationship between two men, hence an indication of non vaginal sex.

Indian literature makes use of various tropes for legitimizing same sex relationships, in order to avoid contradictions with the established gendered norms. In Bengali text *KritivasaRamayana,* the birth of Bhagirath happens through the sexual union of two females,through the divine sanction of the God Shankara. Here this 'divine intervention' acts as a 'trope' that is used to legitimize and approve homosexuality. Sex -change and cross - dressings are another trope that happens many a times in the ancient Indian myths.One such figure is Shikhandi, a character in the epic Mahabharata. It is told that Shikhandi never becomes a man but is a woman equal to a man and is the wife of Arjuna. On the other hand, although Koran strictly condemns homosexuality, but within Islamic culture in India in the latter half of the tenth century, "a huge body of literature on same sex love especially those concerning between men" emerged. For instance, the relationship of Muslim ruler, Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna with his slave Ayaz, who compares their relation with "heterosexual lovers in South Asian history - Heer and Ranjha, Laila and Majnun" and eventually stands as an epitome

of perfect love in 'ghazals'. Although with 'ghazals', the gender of the beloved is usually ambiguous, but in "Mahmud and Ayaz poems consistently identifies the beloved as male, through the trope of Mahmud's passionate longing for Ayaz". In fact, "the context of an intense male-male attraction at first sight", has also been mentioned in "eleventh-century Sanskrit Kathasaritsagara story-cycle". Though homosexual relations were widely visible during this time but were never mentioned derogatorily. Further the "queer Urdu ghazals" composed by Sa'adatYar Khan Rangin (1756-1834) introduced lesbian voice to the "literary elites of Lucknow", that portrays intimate feelings of "women narrator" for her "feminine aashiq" which "extended to eroticism" (Vanita, 2000) explicitly depicting same sex desires.

Vanita argues that although words describing same sex desire between women were present in pre-colonial Indiantexts, their absence is conscious in colonial and post-colonialdiscourses. She identifies the nineteenth century as the crucial period of transition where a minor strand of homophobia became the dominant voice in mainstream discourse. However homosexuality was condemned by the colonialists and framed as a criminal activity. Thus most of the anti-colonialnationalists internalized homophobic attitudes and viewed homosexuality as an unspeakable crime. Thus literary narratives of sexuality underwent a great transformation during the British rule.In the introduction to the Phobic and the Erotic, Brinda Bose and Subhabrate Bhattacharya attempt to locate the Indian identity with regard to the question of sexuality. According to them, contemporary Indian Sexual identities are constructed out of the peculiar, particular, multiplication effects and perceptions of tradition, modernity,

colonization and globalization that are more often than not in confrontation with each other. Earlier forms of sexuality and identities were reconstituted according to the new norms of colonial rule and thus the normalization of heterosexual identity was established.Thus the cultural, educational as well as conservative organizations attempt to control same sex relations with horror and even violence. Marriage and family are newly constructed institutions that negate the notions of older same sex spaces like ashram and all. Homosexuality was also considered as a threat to masculinity.John and Nair sum up the feminist approach to sexuality as a challenge to biological 'genitality', as "a way of addressing sexual relations, their spheres of legitimacy and illegitimacy, through the institutions and practices as well as the discourses and forms of representation that have long been producing, framing, distributing and controlling the subject of sex"(John and Nair 1).

Feminists like Rich, Wittig, Grosz, and Butler have all critiqued a sex/gender system of social arrangement that are seen as site of heteropatriarchy which oppress its members through heteronormativity. Marriage normativity and compulsory heterosexuality are at the core of heteronormative structures, and are seen by these feminists as a powerful force of women's oppression. Lesbian as a concept, used to differentiate with a shared sexual orientation, is a twentieth century construct. The word lesbian is derived from the name of the Greek island Lesbos, which is the home to the sixth century BC poetess Sappho. For Lesbian feminists, the subversiveness of mainstream feminism did not extend to sexuality. Mainstream feminists failed to question the traditional views of same sex-relations. Lesbian feminists state that mainstream

feminist assumes that there exists an essential female identity which all women have in common irrespective of differences of race, class or sexual orientation. The perceptual screen ofheterosexism prevented any consideration of lesbian issues in pioneering feminist writings. Lesbian feminist activists try to deconstruct the heterosexual patriarchal society. For them lesbianism seems to be a choice that is, a political anti-patriarchal choice. In her essay titled "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" which is also called the manifesto of Lesbian activism Adrienne Rich argues for a "lesbian continuum" by attacking "the double bias of racism and homophobia" which is attributed to women of colour. According to her, lesbian existence comprises both the "breaking of a taboo and the rejection of a compulsory way of life".

Moreover, queer theory presents a stimulating idea of textual analysis of literature. Earlier queer authors apply various strategies to convey queer meanings without addressing them directly. The language and themes of queer texts are completely different and unique from other texts. Thus it implies that the existence of queer language is believed to have evolved from the imposing of norms and labels from an external mainstream culture. So, critics present their queer reading of a text through aqueer interpretation of the language, symbols and implicit ideas.With more authors choosing homosexual themes for their literary works, a same sex story no longer remains a taboo for Indian writers.Queer writers now days do not hide their orientations and they openly declare their works as queer literary texts. Thus a change can be witnessed from literary texts dealing queerness implicitly to works that addresses homosexual themes and characters explicitly.

,Ismatchugtai was one of the first woman to come forth and write *Lihaaf*(1942) on female sexuality. During the 1970s and 1980s, gay characters began surfacing in Indian literature.In 1977Shakuntala Devi wrote *The World of Homosexuals*. The 1990s saw playwright Mahesh Dattani's plays such as *Dance Like a Man* and *Seven Steps Around Fire*, set amongst the hijra community in India.A critical moment of rupture in Indian queer sexuality occurred with the release of Deepa Mehta's film *Fire* in 1996.In the film, Sita remarks to her lover Radha, "There is no word in our language to describe what we are or what we feel for each other". *The Boyfriend* (2003) by Raja Rao is among the first gay novels written in English in India. This book is about Mumbai's gay subculture, narrated through a passionate fling between an upscale journalist and a much younger Dalit boy.His subsequent novel Hostel Room 131 (2010) is also an openly gay novel.Mayur Patel's novel, *Vivek and I*(2010), is about a teacher who fancies a student in his school.In 2010, Rahul Mehta published his collection of short stories named *Quarantine*. Anita Nair's *Ladies Coupe*(2001) tells the story of five women from very different backgrounds and dealt with lesbian encounters through one of the characters. ManjuKapoor's*A Married Woman* (2003) brazenly explored a lesbian plot at a time when people where still opening up to the idea of homosexuality on literature.*Feminist Fables*(1981) by SunitiNamjoshi and Kamala Das's*My Story*(1976) are known for exploring the theme of homosexuality. Contemporary writers also see gender imbalance at play.Anita Kumar in her book *Cappuccino Confessions*(2017) discusses homosexuality and infidelity through an unconventional mother-daughter relationship.

The 2006 book by DevduttPatnaik ,*The man who was a woman and other queer tales from Hindu lore*, masterfully encompasses ancient Indian stories of gender transformations and the existence of the third sex,the hijras ,in Hindu scriptures.

The idea of gender as a cultural construct and the notion of prescriptive gender behavior are not new. Gendered behavior as Judith Butler points out is a set of performative acts scripted by cultural discourse. She argues that an organizing gender core within an individual is an illusion that is discursively maintained; the fact that the gendered subject is politically constituted through disciplinary mechanisms is obscured from perception. The body of the colonized subject, thus, becomes a surface on which colonial and nationalist discourses inscribe acceptable patterns of gendered behavior. Heterosexuality refers to the way in which heterosexual culture is taken as the basis of human association which models on inter-gender relations persisting within all communities andsubsequently considered to be the mode of reproduction without whichsociety would collapse. Compulsory heterosexuality refers to the essentialised sexual desire between man and woman which is seen as natural, that condemns homosexuality as a disease. Therefore, normal and heterosexual are understood as synonymous. Living with heteronormative culture means learning to see straight, to read straight, and to think straight. Thus all social relations, perceptions and thinking that exist within the society are heteronormative. However, there are interruptions in these normalized 'straight' forms.

Queer signify any non-normative behavior, relationship, or identity occurring at a specific normal, further indicating to an

alternative form of desire that threatens the stability of the dominant norm. Around the eighteenth century, homosexuals were considered to be sick, scandalous, dangerous victims, prey and are often locked up which does notnecessarily haves to be prison and this seen within houses of correction, the penal colonies, the tribunals and the asylums. They were condemned to the status of mad people having mysterious psychology. Thus, homosexual is seen as a kind upon which one can exercise power and derive pleasure. "The pleasure that comes of exercising a power that questions , monsters, watches , spies, searches out,palpates, brings to light" that involves "capture and seduction, confrontation and mutual reinforcement" (Foucault 1976), hinting at boundaries that are not to be crossed. In The Sensational Issues, a criticalevaluation of the play of Mahesh Dattani, who writes authoritatively on the issue of homosexuality, Sangeeta Das rightly comments that every second person may be a homosexual but fear of ostracism from the society restrains him from exposing himself.

However the modern critics are trying hard to disturb the politics of binary ideas such as hetero-homo,masculine-feminine, gay –lesbian and woman-man. Queer literature talks about finding the queer voice as the beginning of their politics that makes them question the cultures, social and political basis of the norms that tries to invisibilise them. By dismissing homosexual tradition as unnatural and thereby negating the existence of queer people in ancient India, there is an attempt to heterosexualise existing queer tradition.Even in this twenty-first century, India still frames homosexual desires as an import from the west and thereby demands the purity of manhood and womanhood.Over the past decade,LGBT

people gained more acceptances in India especially in urban areas. But segregation is still present in rural areas, where they face rejection from families and ostracism from public. In 2018, Supreme Court of India decriminalized consensual adult sex saying sexual orientation is natural and people have no control on it. However queer identity still suffers the most deplorable trauma, even though they have substantial voice today. Despite having a vital role in both the outer and inner world,they are still invisible and unacknowledged. Although represented in all cultures and throughout the ages, the Indianness of queer literature deserves special mention and detailed exploration. Theysimultaneously challenge the heteropatriarchal spatial deployment found in mainstream narratives and dominant cultural practices in India. Queer theory examines the discourse of homosexuality developed in the last century in order to place the queer into historical context and deconstructing the contemporary arguments.

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Confluence of Capitalism and Colonialism in Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies*

Roshi K Das

Sea of Poppies is the first novel in Ibis trilogy and it deals with the India of colonial times. It details the lives of many; Indians, an African American, English, a French woman etc and tells how they landed up on board the titular ship, Ibis. It talks about their voyage thereafter and ends with the ship caught in a storm in the sea.

Amitav Ghosh is an author not unfamiliar to the Indian English reader. He has authored many fiction and nonfiction works which have received wide critical acclaim. This particular novel was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize which in the end was won by *White Tiger*, another Indian English novel. The kind of research that goes into each of Ghosh's writing is immense.

That colonialism was another venture of capitalism is a known fact. There have been histories of exploitation, looted resources, exported raw materials and the like. *Sea of Poppies* deals with a less recorded history: the history of India's opium trade with China, the rise and fall of it, and its effect on the Indian lives and lifestyles. Wikipedia defines capitalism thus: "Capitalism is an economic system based upon private ownership of the means of production and their

operation for profit. Characteristics central to capitalism include private property, capital accumulation, wage labour, voluntary exchange, a price system and competitive markets." Capitalism is an economic process that is governed by the laws of profit and modern day capitalism accentuated the hunt for raw materials and markets. But with the opium trade it was not simply a hunt for the raw material. The concern of the British was the opium trade with china, a country that had always eluded their grasp. When asked doesn't the opium trade cause a great deal of addiction and intoxication in China which is rather ungodly Benjamin Burnham replies in the novel:

As a Christian nation this is the single most important lesson we can offer to China- and I have no doubt that the message would be welcomed by the people of that unfortunate country, were they not prevented from hearing it by the cruel despot who sways them. It is tyranny alone thatis to blame for China's degeneracy, sir. Merchants like myself are but the servants of free Trade, which is immutable as God's commandments. (117)

In an interview given to BBC Ghosh talks about how opium financed the British rule in India. Till 1920s India was the greatest opium exporter in the world. Twenty years after the opium trade stopped the British left Indiabecause no other single commodity accounted for about 17-20% of Indian revenues. The idea of exporting opium to china started in 1780 with Warren Hastings. Most of the opium in India was grown in Bengal Presidency and Malwa region. The Ghazipur Opium Factory in India continues to be one of the single largest opium producers in the world. India still

produces 70% of world's opium production and 90% of it is exported annually.

Sea of Poppies tells what happened when poppy replaced the cultivation of wheat and other cereal grains. Poppy becomes ubiquitous. Deeti applies poppyseedoil to her daughter's hair; she cooks potatoes in poppy seed paste. It has been seven years since the roof of her home was thatched because everybody is cultivating poppies and straw has become a luxury. Deeti plans to roof her house with this year's harvest.

Cultivating poppies is described as a difficult feat. Poppy plants need constant irrigation and the soil should be ploughed well leaving no lumps of earth behind. Harvesting it is a more problematic phenomenon because each pod should be individually pierced and the sap collected. The whole field should be harvested in ashort period of time, otherwise the sap would dry up ruining the harvest.

After all this strenuous, complicated and tiresome processes when finally Deeti takes her harvest to the opium factory it's not only her dreams of a new roof to her house that are shattered, but also her hopes of survival as well. After much weighing, counting and testing she is paid a meagre amount which is not even sufficient to cover her husband's debt. When she wonders how she can live on this she is told either to send her sons to Mauritius or go to a money lender. She takes the latter option and buys the provisions for six months on loan. Its only later that she understands that for the money she loaned all her land would be forfeit within a few years because the interest rates are too high. She decides eating

weeds is better than taking such a loan, but the money lender refuses to reverse it saying that he has got her thumbprints with him.

At a point of time Deeti remembers her childhood days when poppies were a luxury. They used to grow poppies in small clusters between the fields thatbore the main winter crops. The punishment of cultivation is bearable witha patch or two of poppies. Now the English merchants allow little else to be planted. They forced cash advances on the farmers and made them sign contracts. If they refused the 'sahibs' trapped them in thievery cases. The farmers are coerced to withdraw the other crops and cultivate poppy. Majority of the farmers live in debt because the harvest doesn't provide them with their sustenance.

She (Deeti) had only to look around to know that everyone's land was in hock to the agents of the opium factory: every farmer has been served with a contract, the fulfilling of which left them with no option but to strew their land with poppies. And now, with the harvest over and little grain at home, they would have to plunge deeper into debt to feed their families. It was as if the poppy had become the carrier of Karamnasa's malign taint. (193)

Another person who is ruined by the poppies and the duplicity of the British is the Raja of Raskhali, Neel RattanHalder. He is an educated man, honest, modest and simple. When China began imposing restrictions on the opium trade his estate suffered because he had a share in Mr.Burnham's opium trading. When Neel Rattan doubts the intentions behind the impending opium wars Burnham says the Raja has got no right to moralize on the topic of opium because he owes everything he owns to opium. Neel retaliates

sharply saying that he would not go to war for it. All the tension between the coloniser and the colonised results in Neel Rattan being arrested for a false forgery case and later being transported to the penal settlement of Mauritius for seven years after a burlesque trial.

Another aspect of Indian history that the novel deals with is the system of indentured labour. Indentured labour was a form of debt bondage by which 3.5 million Indians were transported to various colonies of European powers to provide labour for the plantations. According to Wikipedia it started when the slave trade ended and continued till 1920. A point that Ghosh makes in the interview is that most of these indentured labourers came from all the opium growing regions in the Benares and Ghazipur areas. The indentured emigration started in the 1830s and that was the peak of the opium traffic.

Deeti once witnesses the marching of these indentured labourers or 'girmitiyas'.

Bundles of belongings sat balanced on their heads and shoulders, and brass pots hung suspended from their elbows. It was clear that they had already marched a great distance., for their dhotis, langots and vests were stained with the dust of the road. The sight of the marchers evoked pity and fear in the local people, some of the spectators clucked their tongues in sympathy.... The silver that was paid for them went to their families, and they were taken away, never to be seen again: they vanished, as if into the netherworld (71-72)

It's interesting to note that the sight evokes pity and sympathy in the onlookers. Pity definitely at a fellow being's suffering; fear

because this fate of indentured labour might be what the future holds for their hand to mouth existences. In Ibis, the ship that transports these indentured labourers among who is included Deeti and her saviour Kaluaa dying woman gives Deeti some poppy seeds.

She looked at the seed as if she had never seen one before. And suddenly she knew that it was not the planet above that governed her life. It was this miniscule orb, at once beautiful and all devouring, merciful and destructive, sustaining and vengeful. This was her shani, her Saturn. When Kalua asked her what she was looking at, she raised her fingers to his lips and slipped the seed seed into his mouth. Here, taste it. It is the star that took us from our homes and put us on this ship. It is the planet that rules our destiny. (452)

By 1900 it is recorded that a quarter of Britain's capital was generated in its colonies. Wikipedia says that before the arrival of British, India was the world leaderin manufacturing producing 25% of the world's industrial output and remained so in the until the middle of the eighteenth century, prior to the British rule. India's share of the world economy declined from 24.4% in 1700 to 4.2% in 1950 and its share of global industrial output declined from 25% in 1750 to 2% in 1900. This is what colonialism left us with, not the post offices, police stations or railway stations which might have happened even in the absence of colonial invasion.

The analysis of the novel illustrates the close imbrications of capitalism and colonialism. Ghosh often talks about how the world has been altered by the Imperialist greed. The character of Mr. Burnham who is an all-in-one specimen of a colonialist, capitalist, evangelist and a potential rapist foregrounds the violence embedded

in capitalism. It is the greed of the English merchant that transformed farming into an agricultural monoculture; it is the greed of the English merchant that ousted Neel Rattan from his Halder Estate; it is the same greed that transported millions of indentured labourers across the seas with no prospects of a return. All through the novel Ghosh unveils the economic demands that motivate colonial-era capitalism.

Mr. Burnham hails free trade as Jesus Christ in the novel. Avarice is raised to the stature of a religion with free trade as its chief deity. In Ghosh's works colonialism always puts on the darkest and goriest garb; without exaggeration just one of its too many robes. *Sea of Poppies*along with being a highly readable book is an elaborate peep into a forgotten page in India's history. This page reiterates how colonialism was always a synonym of capitalism.

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A Critical study of Translatability and Cultural Comprehension on *Aadujeevitham* and *Goat days*

Clint Peter Roy

Aatujeevitham is a novel that portrays extreme degrees of suffering with gentle overtones. This is brought into existence from an intensive contrast that evokes and transforms sympathy into empathy. Seemingly, the novel does not contain a wide depiction of cultural nuances but a passive suggestion of culture which serves to be an essential platform or prelude that is subtly carried over the entire discourse providing the greatest degree of contrast that renders realism and sentimentality .This ordinariness of culture which is thus intricately intertwined with the protagonist blended with the realism in language stands inextricable from the Malayalam community. This upper hand of culture with regard to the matter of comprehension which is implicit in the definitions of the novelist is lost with the translation intended for a foreign reader. On discussing the correspondence of translation the fundamentality of cultural comprehension is clear with the view of Eugene.A.Nida, "differences between cultures may cause more severe complications for the translator than do differences in language structure" (Nida, 130).

Najeeb who is a sand miner in the river in the interiors of Kayamkulam as everyone, is attracted by the higher standards of life assured by the gulf migrating cult of the era.This urge is fuelled by the existential crisis of the rural churning poor which can be associated much with Kerala.

എല്ലാം സാധാരണ മലയാളികളുടെയും സാധാരണമോഹങ്ങൾ മാത്രം. അതുതന്നെയുമല്ല പുഴയിൽ നിന്നും മണൽവാരലൊക്കെ നിയന്ത്രിക്കാൻ പോവുകയാണെന്ന് ഒരു പറച്ചിലും ഉ്. അതൂടെ പോയാൽപ്പിന്നെ മറ്റെന്തുപണികിട്ടാനാണ്. . .? പട്ടിണികിട്ടാൻ പറ്റുമോ. . . ? പായിരുന്നെങ്കിൽ കിടക്കാമായിരുന്നു. കിടന്നിട്ടുമു്. ഇപ്പോ ഉമ്മായുടെ നിർബന്ധത്തിന് വഴങ്ങി ഒരു കല്യാണം കഴിച്ചു. അവൾ നാലുമാസം ഗർഭിണിയുമാണ്. ചെലവുകൾക്കു മേൽ ചെലവുകൾ മണൽകൂനപോലെ വന്നു നിറയാൻ പോകുന്ന കാലം. (Daniel, 45).

The above sentences have intrinsic impressions of cultural aspects peculiar to Kerala or the rustic deals of Kayamkulam- sand mining starvation, the institution of marriage, maternal or parental coercion and social coherence in decision making and subjective ethnic cohesions. The essence of these impressions stands beyond the same sentences in English. "There was a rumor that sand mining from the river was going to be regulated. If that too is gone, what work can I get? Can one go hungry? I have, in the past. But things are different now. Now, at Ummah's insistence, I am married. My wife is four months pregnant Expenditure will mount up like a mound of sand". (Koyipally, 35)

The theoretical foundations of Eugene.A.Nida in translation studies assert that "the translator himself is the focal element in translating and thus he says there cannot be any completely imper-

sonal objectivity in the work" (Nida, 145). This is because, according to Nida, the translator is a part of the cultural context in which he or she lives. He states that, atranslator cannot simply match words from a dictionary; rather he must in a real sense create a new linguistic form to carry the concept expressed in the source language. This understanding put forth by Nida finds much space to critically view the intrinsic aspects of the translated version of Aatujeevitham, Goat Days. In this case both the author and the translator share the same cultural background of Kerala. This is evidently traced with its comparison that here the translator's job naturally is scarce in achieving any completely impersonal objectivity in the work. That is, objectivity is automatically subjected to the cultural contexts to which both the writers belong to. This thus in effect has rendered the translation as an objective work corresponding to the original in all its overt designs. The translation here but holds with a deep sense of subjectivity that could only be conveyed to a Malayali reader, rejecting any subjective correspondence to a reader outside the culture of Kerala.

Benyamin signifies much many parts of the novel's soul and feelings through Najeeb's soliloquies. Najeeb poor naïve rural character who has reached Riyadh in search of job is taken by an Arab illicitly. Oblivious to the situation Najeeb is absolutely resorted to the Arbab, (whom he mistook to be the one he was expecting) who takes him to desert. Najeeb's rustic elements of trust and deep faith and shallow skepticism reflect the culture and evolvement of his self in the simple native discourses. This is endued with life through his soliloquies while he is taken from the airport to the desert. His realization of what least a pick-up vehicle is, on which he was taken in,

his manner of observations of the vicinity and vehicle, very typical to the rural styles, explicit wondering at the new sights, and his blind trust in others add to the course of rustic simplicity in Najeeb. The burning of his heart at the Arbab's act of throwing his bag to the back of the vehicle which had those glass containers of pickle prepared by his wife Sainu and his mother inculcates his sentiments for home and dear ones. The lack of any suspect of his future from the behaviors of the Arabs and all surmounted by the necessity to survive, and the crisis of existence, is challenged through the language that flows out of a typical rustic man with an utmost pain and naive mentality, to believe all what is said and shown, finds a genuine portrayal through Benyamin's styles of presentation.

Accordingly, Goat days, with such a larger cultural context is confined and contained solely to a particular audience, into which the translator's activity is fitted. In this model of translation, according to Nida's concepts of translation, a message in language 'A' is decoded by the receptor into a different form of language 'A'. It is then transformed by a "transfer mechanism" into language 'B'. So Nida points that the translation must not only discover the corresponding symbols with which to communicate the message in 'B', but must also organize those symbols in the form required by language 'B'. Thus Nida theoretically describes translatability as a process in which the concept is transferred possibly in the essential "kernel" from the language 'B', by which the corresponding utterance in language 'B' is generated. Towards looking into the translation of Aatujeevitham a certain missing of this kernel is altogether appropriated.

Goat Days corresponding to Aatujeevitham after its literary depiction of the Kerala culture and Najeeb as its representative, who was shifted or transplanted to another cultural milieu with both the refines andcrudeness of the Arab culture, seemingly fails to evoke a conjunction of the cultural contradictions which is painted through the language that evokes realism as provided by Aatujeevitham. The translation thus underscores itself in redesigning the elaborate structures of the Malayalam expatiation. This is evident from the point where Najeeb and Hakkim are taken to the desert. Najeeb's colourful expectations even in the midst of the tedious journey to the desertand his unquenchable belief in Allah and the trust in the arbab scores higher in setting the native mindset of a rural Kerala about a generation before. Towards the further advancements of the novel, it makes a genuine portrayal of the remarks on the oppression of the humanity and slavery. This is presented through the language of Najeeb's spectacle preserving the very impressions of any Malayalam reader to cry for his homeland, commemorating all its comforts, in contradiction with the grievous Arab styles.

അർബാബ് ദേഷ്യം പിടിച്ച കാട്ടുപൂച്ചയെപ്പോലെ എന്തോ ഒന്ന് മുര ു. ഞങ്ങൾ രു പാവങ്ങളല്ലേ അർബാബ്. ഒന്നും ഏതും അറിയാത്ത രുപേർ. ഞങ്ങളോടിങ്ങനെ അകാര ണമായിചൂടായാലെങ്ങനെ അർബാബിനറിയാമോ, വല്ലാതെവിശ ക്കുന്നു്. അതിലേറെദാഹിക്കുന്നുമു്. ഇങ്ങനെ പട്ടിണികിടന്ന ഒരുദിവസം ജീവിതത്തിൽ ഓർമ്മയില്ല.അല്ല ഞങ്ങളെന്തിന് പാവം അർബാബിനെ പഴിക്കുന്നു. അയാൾക്കും കാണില്ലെ ക്ഷീണവുംവിശപ്പുമൊക്കെ. (Daniel, 61).

This innocence in language of expression and thought pro-

cesses often fails or drains in the translation in presenting the precise man subjected to his native styles. The arbab growled like an angry wild cat. 'We are two poor things arbab who do not know anything at all. Why are you angry with us like this? Do you know arbab we are hungry? In fact, more thirsty than hungry. No why should we accuse the arbab? Wouldn't he also be hungry and thirsty?' (Koyippally, 54-55).

The voice of the pathetic conditions of humanity is universal but the manner of expression varies with culture and experiences, is evident in reading thetranslationwith the source. Accordingly the translation above cannot absolutelyfulfill the course of feelings expressed in the language which requires more detailed principles that govern translation which can reproduce a "Formal Equivalence" (165) into a "Dynamic Equivalence" (166) as derived by Nida in his essay Principles of Correspondence.

The translation in Goat Days thus suggests a plain formal-equivalence according to Nida which is basically source oriented; that it is designed to reveal as much as possible of the form and content of the original Goat Days thus possessing the features of such a formal equivalence attempts toreproduce several formal elements including grammatical units consistency in word usage and meanings in terms of the source context,for example"സൈനുവിന്റെ കഴുത്തിൽ കിടന്ന ഇത്തിരി പൊന്ന് പണയം വച്ചും വീടിന്റെ ആധാരമെടുത്ത് ബാങ്കിലേക്ക് ഓടിയും കൂട്ടത്തിൽ മണൽ വാരുന്നവരോടൊക്കെ നുള്ളിപ്പെറുക്കിയുംഅറിയാവുന്നവരോടൊക്കെ കൊച്ചുകൊച്ചുതുകകൾ കടംവാങ്ങിയും ഒപ്പിച്ചു. അതെ ഒപ്പിച്ചു എന്ന വാക്കാണ് അതിനു ചേരുക" (Daniel, 46-47). Here the translation is designed to be "I finally fixed up the total by mortgaging the

house and the little gold Sainu had as jewelry and by collecting small amounts from other miners and by borrowing from everyone I knew. Yes 'fix up' best describes it" (Koyipally,37).As Nida states, such styles in the reproduction of grammatical unitsin translating may consist, nouns by nouns, verbs by verbs etc. keeping all phrases and sentencesintact, without splitting and readjusting the units and there by preserving all formal indicators, e.g. poetic indentation. "അതിന്റെ രക്തമിറ്റുന്ന ശീല്ക്കാരം പേടിപ്പെടുത്തുതായിരുന്നു"(Daniel, 62)as "Its blood-curling whoosh was frightening" (Koyippally,56) or "കാലമേ !! നിന്റെമുഖം എത്ര വിചിത്രം..!!"(Daniel, 186) "Time, how strange is your face!"(Koyippally,211) or or as with "അർബാബേ, എന്റെ കശ്മലാ "(Daniel,62) which is turned into "Rogue arbab"(Koyippally,55).Yet another is "ഹക്കീം പിടഞ്ഞെണീറ്റു"(Daniel,61) is made, "As Hakkim scrambled awake, the arbab signaled him to come out" or as seen with, "ശരീരത്തെ ബാധിച്ച് നേർത്ത വിറയലോടെ ഞാൻ ആ ഭീകരരൂപിയുടെ അടുത്തേക്ക് ചെന്നു"(Daniel,67) is, "Shaking slightly, I walked towards the scary figure"(Koyippally,61). "നീ പോടാ പട്ടി!" (Daniel, 187) is translated as "Off you go, dog!"(Koyippally,213).

In Nida's conceptions, translations that attempting to produce consistency in word usage, as an f-e translation, usually aims at so-called concordance of terminology; that italways rendersa particular term in the source language document by the corresponding term in the receptor document. The same means find space in Goat Daysasa translationintoEnglish from Aatujeevitham the Malayalam work.For example "pickle of fresh water fish" which is used to correspond aattuvalaachar. In the theories of Principles of Correspon-

dence Nida thus suggest that such principles of translations (as found with Goat Days) may of course, be pushed to ameaningless strings of words in attaching with the cultural signifiers.

The sole solace the protagonist finds is by trying to identify the experiences in the desert with his own home and culture even when his hopes are killed. Recognizing the dessert wind at the night when he was brought to the Masara with the coolness of makaramasam in Kerala is an escape or relief the mind seeks for home, that is densely addressed to anative reader. More acutely the novel is supposed to have an inverse effect more with that of the natives who still continue their life in Kerala, a feel in comparison with the Gulf diaspora and the general expatriates.

അതുവരെ എന്റെയുള്ളിൽ ഉറങ്ങിക്കിടന്നിരുന്ന എല്ലാവിചാരങ്ങളും ഉണർന്നെഴുന്നേറ്റ് ഒരഗ്നിപർവ്വതം എന്നപോലെ എന്നിൽ പൊട്ടിത്തെറിച്ചു. എനിക്കവിടുന്നു രക്ഷപ്പെടണം. എനിക്കു നാട്ടിൽ പോകണം. എനിക്കെന്റെ ഉമ്മയെ കാണണം. എനിക്കെന്റെ സൈനുവിനെ കാണണം. എനിക്കെന്റെ നബീലിനെ കാണണം. എനിക്കെന്റെകൂട്ടുകാരെ കാണണം. എനിക്കെന്റെ നാടുകാണണം. എനിക്കെന്റെ മൺവഴി എനിക്കെന്റെ മണ്ണ് കാണണം. ശരിക്കും ഈ ഗൃഹാതുരത്വം എന്നൊകെ പറയു എന്താണെന്ന് എനിക്കപ്പോൾ വിവേചിച്ചറിയാനായി. അതൊരു കൊതിയാണ് (Daniel,136)

Every migrant Malayalis to have a great experience of mental acclimatization through which one has had undergone on the very day they migrated and boarded another nation. Here Najeeb is immersed in adeeppool of mental anguish with physical excretion as an effect of his migration. Najeeb's recreation of his homeland's cozy by assuming them as those with the feelings of physical exertions (when in Kerala) toretain the fragrance of his home land and

security, is deeply relative to the diaspora.

Nida says however one cannot simply reproduce certain formal elements of the source message. For example, puns, chiasmic order of words instances of assonance, or acrostic features of line-initial sounds which utterly defy equivalent reading.Nida thus advices to empty such instances by employing certain types of marginal notes, if the feature in question merits an explanation, which is absent in Goat Days, for example, the terms like Ikka, chammanthippodi, ummah etc.

Some of the formal equivalence employed which according to Nida may have significance only in terms of the source language or culture, asis seemingly abstract and absent in the English translation of Aatujeevitham, example, the word "PmXn" is universalized with the word religion."നമ്മുടെ ജാതീല് ഒരു മേരിയോ?"(Daniel,149), structured in English, "A Mary in our religion"(Koyippally, 163). Or, "പേരുകേട്ടിട്ട് ഒരു നസ്രാണിച്ചിയാണെന്ന് തോന്നുന്നലോടാ"(Daniel, 149), which is remade as "By the sound of her name she seems to be a Christian"(Koyippally,163) has its meaning outside the substantial center of the native version.The same is found with translating "മുശട്വാട"(Daniel, 62) with foul smell which denies the dialectical differences of the multiple usages for foul smell in Malayalam. The trust worthy figure Kunjikka, who operates a hotel in Riyadh, an epitome of love and we-feeling denotes to such few figures of natives amongst the Malayali diaspora abroad and especially found with the successful Mohamedans of the Gulf. Nida's Principles of Correspondence, exhort to suppose that such translations are categorically ruled out. "To the contrary, they are often perfectly valid translations of certain types of mes-

sages for certain types of audiences" (Nida, 166).The certainty of audience can point towards the peculiarity a culture holds with for example, "settle a few debts, add a room to the house, dreams more of the usual cravings of every Malayali, "perhaps the same stock of dreams that the 1.4million Malayali in the gulf had when they were in Kerala -gold watch,fridge,TV,car,a/c, tape recorder,VCP, a heavy gold chain" (Koyippally, 38). The aspirations of Najeeb's heart seems receive an intense touch of emotions when he shares it with Sainu who wholeheartedly declares her wish solely for a life together and the requirements for their unborn child.This tranquilizing mentality of a wife is generalized by Benyamin, who suggest that the wife of every man who is about to leave for the Gulf might tell him the same .This of course points to the recognition of the unexpressed mental strain of the women at home like Sainu and that more over the words of Sainu from her heart, stands beyond explanations and intentions of translations.

To Eugene .A. Nida, a dynamic equivalence or D-E translation may be described as one that concerns with a bilingual and bicultural person canjustifiably say, "that is just the way we say it" (Nida, 166). He inculcates that it is important to realize, that a D-E is not merely another message which is more or less similar tothat of the source and that it is a translation, and as such, must clearly reflect the meanings and intents of the source. The English translation of Aatujeevitham, Goat Days, which adopts a Formal-Equivalence style in translation, dwells up on the questions regarding the relation between language and subjectivity, and structure and agency in language. Therefore it stands in contradiction to the second tenet of Eugene.A.Nida that describes it as "the closest natural equiva-

lent to the source language message" (166) - Dynamic Equivalence. This type of definition contains three essential terms according to Nida; Equivalent, which points toward the source language message; Natural, which points toward the receptor language and Closet which binds the two orientations together on the basis of the highest degree of approximation. Nida further defines D-E translation as is directed primarily toward equivalence of response rather than equivalence of form. It is important todefine more fully the implications of the word natural, as applied to such translations. According to Nida,basically, the word natural is applicable to three areas of communication process; for a natural rendering must fit a receptor language and culture as a whole, the context of the particular message, and the receptor-language audience. On observing Goat Days it fails to implicit Nida's theory of "Natural". The scene of the Arbab's demonstration of his subjugation of Najeeb as a slave, presented in Malayalam is "ഒരിക്കലും രക്ഷപ്പെടാനാവാത്ത വിധം എന്റെ ജീവിതം ആ ആടുകളുടെ ഇടയിൽ ബന്ധപ്പെട്ടു കഴിഞ്ഞിരിക്കുന്നു എന്ന് ആ നിമിഷം എനിക്ക് പൂർണ്ണ ബോധ്യംവന്നു.! "(Daniel, 76)

In English; "That moment I realized that my life had become inescapably bound to those goats" (Koyippally, 73). To stick on with the theory of Dynamic Equivalence and Naturalism the sentence could be restructured as "The moment stormed me of the reality of my life's inescapable detain with the goats in perpetuity."J.H.Frere has described such a quality by stating that the language of translation ought to be a pure, impalpable and invisible element, the medium of thought and feeling and nothing more; it ought to never to attract attention to itself . To him, all importations from foreign languages are to be avoided. This is significant to be

read with what the translation of Aatujeevitham, Goat Days, which presents with. Here on contrary to Frere, the language happens to be palpable. "A translation of dynamic equivalence aims at complete naturalness of expression…" states Nida, "and tries to relate the receptor to modes of behavior relevant within the context of his own culture" (Nida, 159). To him, the receptors of translation should comprehend the translated text to such an extent that they can understand how the original receptors must have understood the original text.

The article thus regards over the equations over the expresser and receiver, where it finds that the easiest way of expression and easiest way of comprehension happens best only between the two parties in a native cultural circle. Here recommending a solution for untranslatability, Dynamic Equivalence theory is put to limelight. As the theoreticians suggest, this seems to best suit the translation of Aatujeevitham from that of verbatim or word to word translation.

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Flick V/S Real : Cast of Muslims in Malayalam Cinema

Binu K D & Amal Lal K K

Though anathema to the truth at hand the tendency for stereotyping is universal. Edward Said in*Orientalism*establishes in unmistakable terms how the Western world instrumented the process of orientalism to construct stereotypical images of the 'Orient'.Stereotypes are mentalimages crystallizing the perceiver's knowledge, beliefs, and expectations about the 'other'.Stereotyping becomes problematic as it strengthens the predominant perceptions about the other and showcase them as general truth. The damage created is twofold: on the one hand it distances one from the reality of acertain culture and on the other it endorses distorted images of that culture. In *Covering Islam* Said argues that it is their hegemony of ideas that put the high-minded, modern Western world against the exotic, debased and absurd 'Orient'. Said has effectively elucidated how over the years, Western media has perceived Islam as a backward, fundamentalist and hostile religion. The Orientalist dyslogistic perception of Islam in the Western media has been gaining strength since the Post 11/9.

Stereotypical assumptions are widely employed in discussions centering round the 'other'; its religion, race and ethnicity. Racial stereotypes hinge on the beliefs that all members of the same race or community share certain characteristics, especially thenegative ones. Racial variancesamong people are products of culturalexclusiveness and since one does not have access to the cultural universe of the 'other', one tendsto think about the other'sculture, religion and society in a structured manner. Religion as a vital aspect ofculture, often becomes a focal point of stereotypical representations. Cultural media, especially films bear testimony to this fact. This probably emanates from the fact that religious doctrines, philosophies,and ideologies are difficult to be deduced in the short span of a film and hencethe same are subjected to reduction to a set of stereotypesto facilitate easy comprehension by the audience. Besides, in filmmaking there is a generaltendency of reducing intricate matters to their core and generalizing them. Religious minorities areoften subject to such reductionist practices. For example Muslims, replicating the tendency in the Hollywood and Bollywood film industry, arefrequently portrayed in Malyalam cinema as traditional, parochial, anti-national devoid of patriotic leanings, driven to fundamentalistand extremist ideologies.Cinema asa popular medium of cultural representation wieldsthe power to influence the ideas, views and beliefs of its audience. Negative images of Muslims and adverse representation of their culture, society and religion mooted by cinema, not only create detrimental effects on their self-perception but also influence the society's general perception of their identities. This in turn will badly affect their

relationship with other communities in the multi-cultural Kerala society.

Malayalam cinema, at large,preserved a distinctive identity from Indian Cinema. Its difference hinged on the fact that, unlike the movies produced in the Hollywood with an unrealisticsetting and imaginary theme, Malayalam movies possessed a social theme and contemporary locale. Even the very first Malayalam movie *Vigathakumaran* made by J C Daniel in 1928affirms this fact. Post independent Malayalam Cinema has also been effective in addressing the rich cultural plurality of the Kerala society and had engaged with its various political, religious, caste and class issues at least selectively. AlthoughMalayalam Cinema possessed an edge over Indian Cinema with regard to plot, narrative and setting, itfailed hugelyin characterization. Stereotyping of characters as good and bad, high and low, cultured andcoarse became a common strategy. This was more accentuated inimagining the life, and surroundings of the minorities and subalterngroups like Dalits, Tribals, Sex workers, LGBTand so on. The reason for this is the fact that Malayalam film industry has always been characterized by cultural elitism.

A study published in *Bhodhi Commons* website by Brahma Prakash proves thatmostMalayalam movies centre around the lives of the upper caste Hindu and Christian communities. (Prakash, 2014). He offers a list of hits from 1990's onwards and argues that 21 out of 22 movies have a Hindu family setting (except *Spadikam*), 18 out of 22 have an upper caste Hindu lead. What is to be noted in his observationis the fact that not one movie out of the 22 have a Muslim lead. Does it mean that Muslims who constitute almost one

fourth of Kerala's population do not have a story to tell? The reality is that Muslim minority has been basically un-represented or under-represented in mainstream Malayalam cinema.The characters belonging to minority communities , if at all they were represented, were molded and made to fit into the already established social constructs. As stereotypes,Muslim characters were limited to fixed roles as rudimental friend of the hero (Bappu Thangalangady in *Aran Thampuran,* 1997), as a foil to the hero (Moideenkutty Haji in *Kilichundan Mampazham,*2003),as exotic and mysterious femalewithout voice or agency (Khalmayi in *Ponmuttayidunna Tharavu* 1988),as villains in numerous movies and as comediansoften played bythe character of Mamukoya in innumerable films whomouthed an inferior dialect of Malayalam which made him a butt of ridicule.

It appears essential to provide a historical overview of Muslimcastin Malayalam Cinema before presenting a few case studies.Movies that dealt with Muslim liveshad become part of Malayalam cinema eversince Independence. A number of moviesthat focuson the ethnic specific cultural details of Muslims emergedduring the 1960's. In most cases the plot was set within Muslim cultural background.Films such as*Umma*, *Kandam Becha Kottu*, *Kuttikkuppayam*, *Kuppivala*, *Ayisha*, *Kaathirunna Nikkah* and *Subeida* are only a few examples. The problem with these films,often hailed as communitarian movies (*Samudaya Chithrangal)*by film critics,isthat most of them hadportrayed only one side—theundesirable side—ofMuslim life such as polygamy, dowry, Triple Talaq (divorce), child marriageand so on. Other issues that caught the imagination of those behind the screen were the social and

educational backwardness of Muslim communities, various superstitious practices prevalent among them and above all,the existence of Muslim patriarchy which made the life Muslim women a veritable hell. Thus,the so called Muslim Socialsof the nineteen sixty's, mainlydirected and produced by non-Muslim outsiders,had failed significantly in depicting the diverse andprogressive aspects of the Muslim social life, their cultural multiplicity, religious versatility and ethnic simplicity. This could be due to the outsider's lack of access to or lack of knowledge of the experiential world and existential reality of the insider on the one hand and on the other, it might have stemmed from their anxiety to illustrate the backwardness of Muslim life.

The women characters of the Muslim world too receiveda lopsidedtreatment in the so called Muslim Socials. They were depicted as 'self-less' mute victims of religion and patriarchy. *Umma* (1960)directed by Kunchako can be regarded as the first Malayalam movie to showcasethe life of Muslim woman on the silver screen. The focal point of the story ismarital evilwhich is presented asa persistent factor of Muslim life especially in Malabar region.In the movie M*oodupadam* (1963) the female protagonistAmina turns out to be a voiceless silent victim of patriarchyliving according to the whims and fancies of her brother and former lover.

Polygamy figures as arecurrent theme in several movies produced in the 90's.The idealized and exotic Muslim female in purdah without any voice and identityis depicted in*Ponmuttayidunna Tharavu* (1988). Khalmayi who is Hajjiyar's third wifeis hailed as woman with exquisite beauty and she is hidden

from public by Hajiyar. Everyone addresses her as Hajjiyar's wife rather than by her name as if she has no identity apart from the one derived from her husband. The whole villagers manage to see the young wife of Hajjiyar only when she appears in the last scene of the movie amidst a feud. With her traditional attire and the dialect, she symbolizes the typical exotic Muslim female stereotype.Yet another hapless female is Sarain *Ghazal* (1993) who isat the receiving end of Muslim patriarchy in the film. Her suffering is due to mainly her husband Burhanudeen Thangal's extramarital relationships. Forced marriage is the main theme in *Yatheem* (1977). The common strand that runs through these movies is plight of Muslim female who appears as a victim of patriarchy, denied of any voice and agency. What is most discomfiting is that their cries of pain are absolutely devoid of any voices of protest.

The parade of powerless women charactersbeing oppressed and by Muslim patriarchy continues in movies like *Amina Tailors* (1991) and here the muslim woman fall prey to exploitation on account of their educational backwardness. Azeez gives Amina a letter which she could not read as she was illiterate. When women of other communities are portrayed as educated and employed, Amina is still seen in the traditional attire totally ignorant of the changes happening around her. The male members of the community are also portrayed as uneducated and regressive.In movie *Vietnam Colony* (1994) one comes across another powerless muslim woman, Suhra Bai who is portrayed as mad, abandoned and old , ill-fated to suffer the cruelty of her own son. All the above mentioned movies were replete with the instances of the miseries of women

owing to the existence of the oppressive structures of religion, patriarchy and tradition.

The post millennium Malayalm cinema also witnessed movies which toe the line of the earlier representations of stereotyped images of Muslim Community. In the movie *Kilichundan Mambazham* (2003), a commercial hit directed by Priyadarsan, all the aforesaidundesirable aspects of Muslim cultural identity; polygamy, Triple Talaq, child marriage, patriarchy, lack of education, prevalence of superstitions are sarcastically amalgamated. The narrative satirizes Muslim social life, religious practices, family life, kinship relations and cultural practices. Themanners and mannerisms of Moidutty Haji, a polygamist and rich landlord of the village, reduces him to a laughing stock in the movie. The movie begins withMoidutty's third marriage to Aamina despite the disapproval of his two wives which is against the Islamic law. His mother Beeyathumma (Sukumari) scolds her daughters-in-law by saying that a man can marry as many women as he wishes if he is affluent as said in Holy Quran. She explains how she lived with her husband and his other eight wives peacefully! No one in Moidutty's house or village finds his third marriage unusual as they are all seen happily participating in the ceremony except his wives. Moidutty's first wife is plighted to helphimtoget ready for his first night with Aamina! Aamina who is in love with Abdu deliberately avoids sleeping with Moidutty Haji as per their plan. Once when Moidutty Haji finds it impossible to satisfy his sexual desire towards Aamina, he goes to his first wife Fathima. The scene reinforces the stereotypical image of Muslim male as lustful. It also holds up to ridicule the religious ratification of polygamy on the ground that a man needs another woman to satisfy

his sexual needs when the wife is unwilling or in menstrual period or undergoing pregnancy.The movie, thus,stereotypes in a humorous waythe customs and cultural practices of Muslim community.Besides, Malabari Muslim dialect also gets vulgarized in this movie.

An objectionable new tendency in some of the post millennium Malayalam moviesis the projection of the supposedly negative aspects of Muslim social lifeagainst the background of the apparentlynoble culture ofhigh caste Hindu. *Classmates* (2006),directed by Lal Jose,is a typical case in hand. The character Rasiya, belongs to atraditionalpatriarchal Muslim family. In the film sheis denied of her rights as a woman and freedom to love a man from Hindu community. Her father's traditional mindset and patriarchal mentality,indeed,spoils her life and education. As opposedto the image of the cruel traditional Muslim patriarch, is the character of Prof. Iyer, father of Murali, Rasiya's lover.Prof Iyer is portrayed as a secular, progressive and liberalHindu befittinghis high caste status. He commands respect as a learned, secular and liberal minded personnot only in his social circles but also at home as an affectionate and responsible parent. Unlike Resiya' s father who is dead against his daughter's love affair with a Hindu male, Professor Iyer wholeheartedly accepts Rasiya as his daughter-in-law. He doesn't consider her religiona barrierandwelcomes Rasiya to his brahminical householdeven after the death of his son when he learns that she was his son's girlfriend. There is an explicit one to one contrast in the film between the conformist, violent and autocratic nature of Muslimpatriarchy typified by Rasiya's father and the liberal,

secular and progressive culture of the patriarchal Hinduism represented by Prof Iyer.

Another classicexample ofjuxtaposing of the conservative patriarchal Muslim culture with the progressiveHindu culture can be found in *Thattathin Marayathu*(2012),a trendy, new-gen,box office hit.Aisha,the educated, exotic Muslim female clad in purdah, is the female protagonist who signify the contemporarypredicament of the modern Muslim women. In spite of their access to liberating modern education in reputedhigher education institutions in the state, the Muslim women find themselvestrapped in the domestic confinement on account of the narrow minded out look and traditional mind set of Muslim men. The high caste hero, Vinod, isbroad-mindedand secular and is a perfectantithesis of the rigid and oppressive Muslim menfolk of Ayisha's household. Vinod appears as asavior to the helpless heroine who leaves no stone unturned to rescue her from her cultural captivity. He also tries to modernize her in numerous ways to the effect that shegradually adoptsa liberal and secularoutlook outside the fold of her community. The message is loud and clear: if the Muslim woman is to challenge patriarchy andobtainsocial mobility and democratic civil rights she has to venture beyondthe narrow boundariesof her religion and community andhas to embrace asecularidentity- apparently a liberal Hindu identity.In this process of facilitating the self-emancipation of the female protagonist, the high caste Hindu hero acts as a functional agent.It is the cultural agenda that underpins the extreme negative stereotyping of Muslim patriarchy and idealizing of Hindupatriarchyin *Thattathin Marayathu*.

The stereotypical way in which Muslim characters get portrayedin Malayalam films and the recurrence of such negative stereotypes cango a long way in influencing themainstream society's perceptions about the Muslim minority. Common folk often tend to follow the flicks taking them as real and fail to grasp the reality beyond the screen. Its harmfuleffects on the psychology of the typecasted minorityas well as on other strata and segments of the society are profound. In the illusion of reality created by the aesthetic structuring of narrative cinema, the audience aremore prone to perceive what is seen-the detrimental aspects- than view critically to perceive the other side of what is seen.The flicks on the one hand set up the glimpse and couture of Muslims in the mind of others. Reels replete with the negative stereotypical representation of Muslim identities will tend to lead to their low esteem in society. The negative images are ingrained so deepin society's cultural unconscious that the stereotypical rolessometimes seemquite normal to Malayali sensibility.

The above analysis demonstrates that Malayalam cine world cannot be credited with faithful rendering of the Muslim life and locale. It portrays Muslim stereotypes by conforming to the ideologies of the dominant.The stereotypical representation has reinforced the dark shades and unpleasant rickety contours of the Muslim life etched in the mindscape of the common man.N P Sajeesh, a well known Malayalam film critic observes,''Stereotypes are constructed by generalizing the traits of a particular community. The dominant groups target to make these generalizations permanent. Whenever the hierarchy is questioned, stereotypes get emphasized with more power'' (115)(Shalabhachirakukal Kozhiyunna Charithra

Shisharathil, P108).In short the stereotyped reelimages not only affect the Muslim community's self-perception but also negatively influence the view of their subjectivities by others.In spite of all these, there seems some hope in constructive narrative interventions like the 2014 national award winning film*KL10*, *Ennu Ninte Moideen* (Yours Truly, Moideen) (2015)which also won several awards and the recent box office hit *Sudani from Nigeria,* to name only a few, whichdepict the Muslim life in the erstwhile Malabar region with verisimilitude.

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Exploring the Aesthetics of Narration in Nicholas Sparks' Selected Works.

Bibin Sebastian

New York Times bestselling author Nicholas Sparks, is an American romantic drama novelist, producer, and screenwriter. He was born in Omaha, United States, on 31 December 1965. He wrote his first novel which is unpublished when he was under a medical rest due to a sports injury. He wrote twenty novels and two non – fiction books and eleven novels has been adapted to film.*The Notebook,* his first novel was written in 1996 at the age of 28 over a period of six months. His other famous works are *A Walk to Remember* (1999)*, Nights in Rodanthe*(2002), *The Guardian* (2003), *The Last Song* (2009)*, Dear John* (2006), *The Choice* (2007), *The Best of Me* (2011), *The Lucky One* (2012), *Two by Two* (2016)*, Message in a Bottle* (1998) etc.

Among his twenty works, considering the two*, A Walk to Remember* and *Nights in Rodanthe* which were written in the almost same time period, we can see the depiction of the theme romance and family in a different way. Their narrative techniques make them both in a single plane at the same time different one. *A Walk toRemember* which was written in October 1999 was the third

novel written by the author and these 240 paged novels were later adapted to film in 25th January 2002. The novel was set in the time period between 1958 – 59 in Beaufort, North Carolina. Sparks wrote this novel inspired his sister Dannielle Sparks Lewis, who died of cancer on June 2002. The main theme of the novel consists of eternal love and the fact that love conquers all, everything.

"The greater the love, the greater the tragedy when it's over. Those two elements always go together" (Sparks 165). These are the famous words in the book *Nights in Rodanthe*. Like the two elements, love and tragedy mentioned in the quote, constitute the major themes of Sparks's works. It's not different in the case of the works *A Walk to Remember* and *Nights in Rodanthe*. "Romance novels must end happily. Love stories have to have a tragedy" (Sparks 12). *A Walk to Remember*, a love story of teenagers Jamie Sullivan and Landon Carter, is a perfect blend of love and tragedy. As mentioned in the prologue "First you will smile, and then you will cry-don't say you haven't been warned" (Sparks, *A Walk to Remember* 2). Like every other love story, their love also developed unknowingly. Even though they were schoolmates they had never developed any kind of friendship between them. So, they play *The Christmas Angel* took part in the school has an important role in developing their love. Being together in the practice sections and becoming homecoming dancing partners they become friends and later lovers.

The first key to their love can seek out from Jamie asking a favour to Landon, to become the hero of the play *The Christmas Angel*. It is clear from the story that it is the first time in her life she

is asking help from others. In the words of the narrator "Jamie never asked anyone for a favour. I think deep down she suspected that no one would ever do her a favour because of who she was. The very realization made me mad" (54). The last sentence made clear about the train of thoughts that had been passed through the mind of Landon when Jamie asks him the favour. That made him think that he is special to her. In one night, they met after the play, he saw Jamie in a very different look which is more appealing to him. She looks gorgeous in that look. With her hair open, wearing the sweater which was gifted by Landon, it was a mesmerizing sight to him. His heart starts to swings then.

Towards the development of the story, we can see the character transformation of both protagonists. Landon who did a luxurious life starts to think about poor orphan ones and had an interest in spiritual matters. On the other hand, Jamie who led a very spiritual life without any exposure to the outer world, an extraordinary character, starts to become freer to the outer world and her physical look began to change. This can be noted as the influence of love on both.

When we go through the incidents which the author portrayed, like Landon gifting her a sweater, Jamie gifts her Bible to him etc. shows the discovery of sparks for their love. That Bible was her mother's which was given to her at the time of her wedding. When the priest had given that Bible to them, it's her mother who claimed it first and she used to read it all the time, especially when she was in her hard times. By this very incident, Landon confesses to himself that he loves her. With wonder, he says to his heart that

"I'd ever fallen in love with a girl like Jamie Sullivan" (109). And later he confesses his love to her by saying the cliche dialogue of teenagers "I Love You, Jamie…You're the best thing that ever happened to me" (133). Towards the end of the story we can smile as the author said in the prologue i.e., they got married- the fulfilment of their eternal love.

When we look back to the other side of the theme, the tragedy, the warning was given by the author to get stuck into our mind. The first phase of the tragedy occurs in the life of Jamie when her mother dies due to her birth. Her father struggled a lot to bring up her. The special care and affection given to her were maybe due to this. The manner she walked, lived, talked was entirely different from other children. Herbert, as a church minister, led her path in a more religious way.

The second phase is the fatal one that is Jamie is suffering from leukaemia. Landon came to know about this when he confesses his love to her and his desire to marry her. She rejects his proposal in an overwhelming pain in the heart and reveals her present physical condition. It is seven months had passed since she diagnosed this and the doctor had given her a year or less than that. "Only a miracle could save her" (138). As we came to realize that Jamie is sick, we got why Herbert become more anxious and so keen on the matters of Jamie. He had given her very special attention to her. He is not at all ready to hurt her by any means. That is why he rejects Landon's proposal and later accept it when he came to know that Jamie too wishes the same.

One of the heartbreaking incidents in this novel is the message given by Jamie to Landon in Valentine's Day. It was taken from the book of Corinthians in the Bible. It is all about true love. Her present physical situation at that time and her love for Landon reflects those words. The message was:

> Love is always patient and kind. It is never jealous. Love is never boastful or conceited. It is never rude or selfish. It does not take offence and is not resentful. Love takes no pleasure in other people's sins, but delights in the truth. It is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes. (152)

When we move on to the next novel, *Nights in Rodanthe,* we can see the same theme i.e. love and tragedy. But unlike *A Walk to Remember,* it presents the story of love between Adrienne Willis and Paul Flanner, middle-aged ones. Adrienne who was divorced from Jack lead a stressful life by bringing up her three children alone and looking after her father. She struggled a lot to earn for the family. Paul who was also a divorce led his own life without any further care for the family. He avoided hid son too sometimes. He can be called a workaholic. Sometimes fate gives you, your soul partner late, they two met in that winter. As said by the author, "love was the essence of a full and wonderful life" (Sparks, *Nights InRodanthe* 2).

Love can make people young. Their thoughts, actions, words etc. changes to a particular manner of youth. In a New York Times interview, Sparks offers: "I try to keep my men regular guys, doing regular things. Characters in love stories have to be in common settings, but have to meet in original ways and fall in love in original

ways" (Arnold E3). Likewise, when Paul met Adrienne in the inn of Jean, Amanda's friend from the first sight itself he had a crush over her, something like the cliché usage of youth i.e. love at first sight. The transformation of Adrienne shows her eagerness to attract Paul to her, even though she knows that he had. She tries to become young and retain her old appearance back. Later, they made love and their relationship become much stronger. Their relation was not tied under the name of marriage. But they are tied by souls, a knot which can't be untied.

Like the work mentioned before Sparks had portrayed a serious of tragic events in this work. Paul passes through three stages of tragedy. First, he got divorced. His wife went out of his life and this affected his son a lot. His son Mark hated him. This is not only because of his divorce but his character and attitude to the family. It is well portrayed by the author. The second stage of the tragedy that happens to him is a mistake done by him inadvertently. He had a patient named Jill Torrelson. She was affected by a meningioma and died after the surgery. And because of hard luck, it was done by Paul. That incident changed his life. And he thus came to Rodanthe, to meet her husband Robert Torrelson.

The third one was fatal to him. When he went to Ecuador, where his son lived, he met with an accident there and death took him. He missed life with Adrienne. Their dreams, the time they spent together. And the author portrays these emotions through a series of letters. At first, by the letters written by Paul to Adrienne, readers can have the actual intensity of their love. Later, the last letter that came to Adrienne was from Mark, son of Paul. This letter gave

descriptions of Paul's death. Here discloses the major tragedy of the story, which emotionally affected Amanda more than Paul. Another tragic event which can be discovered from Paul's life is what about his son. After the arrival of Adrienne in Paul's life, he changed a lot. He tries to understand the feelings of a son and get started to love him by being a real father. But the fate didn't give him the chance to live with his son and experience the affection of a son to his father. These emotions are well explained in the words in the letter written by Mark.

The next event is the main tragedy of the novel i.e. Paul's death. This made Adrienne's life hopeless. As the author says, "Paul's death had struck her…" (215). Again, fate defeated her by giving her hope and taking it back without any further signs. Once again, she became alone in her life. The feel of the letter and the expressions on her face made clear the intensity of their love. The author won in portraying that exact condition in a few words. Thus, the opinion of *Style* magazine suits that 'a bittersweet love story'. In order for a story to elicit a 'dynamic' response, a reader must be present to interact with the omission of important information within the narrative. "it is only through inevitable omissions that a story will gain its dynamism" (Lodge 216) says Wolfgang Iserin his essay "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach,"

The next narrative technique used by the author is a very popular one i.e. flashback. When we consider these two novels we are able to see that, both the stories went through this technique. This can be said as the soul of the stories. In *A Walk to Remember* the flashback is going through the character Landon Carter, while in

*Nights in Rodanthe*it is through Adrienne. The similarity between both of them is they are the victims of the tragedy. Flashback can be said as the reminiscence.

In the first novel, the flashback starts "in 1958, Beaufort, North Carolina, which is located on the coast near Morehead City" (Sparks, *AWalk to Remember* 3). Landon, the protagonist tells the story of his love with Jamie, their meeting, how he got attracted to her, their character transformation, confessing love, disclosing the details about her disease and finally their marriage. One of the most colourful memories the protagonist present in through flashback was the memories of the day they got married. Landon describes this moment with almost happiness and feelings filled with love and heartbreaking scene of Jamie's arrival. He says:

> Over two hundred guests were inside, and more than that waited outside the doors as we were married on March 12, 1959…. The doors opened and I saw Jamie, seated in her wheelchair, a nurse by her side. With all the strength she had left, Jamie stood shakily as her father supported her. Then Jamie and Herbert slowly made their way down the aisle, while everyone in the church sat silently in wonder. Halfway down the aisle, Jamie suddenly seemed to tire, and the stopped while she caught her breath. Her eyes closed, and for a moment I didn't think she could go on…. Jamie and Herbert started moving again, and I felt my heart surge with pride. (166-68)

Through the words of Landon from his memory, he won to convey the full feel of the story. It helped the readers to live with

Landon and Jamie and become became easy for them to imbibe their feelings both in their past and future. The author was able to portray the mental and physical conditions they go through certain periods through this technique.

In the second novel, the narrator starts the flashback from January 1988 in Rodanthe. Adrienne the protagonist of the novel starts to tell this story to her daughter Amanda. The contents in the flashback were how Adrienne reached Rodanthe, the tragedies in her life, meeting with Paul, how they fall in love, how destiny made them separated, and how death become a villain in the life of Adrienne, Paul and in Amanda too. The relevance of the flashback was made clear when the conversation between Adrienne replies to Amanda's question. They are: " 'Why are you telling me this, Mom?'/ 'Because I think you need to hear it.' " (Sparks, *Nights in Rodanthe* 39).

The flashback in this novel is not only a love story but it is a motivational story to Amanda how to face the hardships of life. The very thought that led Adrienne to disclose her story is that: "Adrienne still held tight to the belief that love was the essence of a full and wonderful life…. Nostalgia was often romanticized: with these memories, there was no reason to make them any more romantic than they already were" (2). Here love and memories can the best treatment. This fact is well portrayed by the narrator through this flashback. This technique gave more emphasis to their love and tragedy that happened to them. Flashback helped to club the past and future at nice blend and made the soul of the story strong.

The significance of the title of both plays can be discovered from the flashback or the story told inside this novel. The title is used as a symbol here, which can be said as another narrative technique opted by the author. At first, the title *A Walk to Remember* is taken from the lines said by Landon i.e. "It was, I remembered thinking, the most difficult walk anyone ever had to make." (Sparks, *A Walk to Remember* 168). Like the title suggests, the characters in this play has a lot of memories in their walk. The walk to refers to the life's journey and the way is the situations we pass through. From the beginning onwards we can see the walks made by the protagonists, which later become the walk together, to their life. The next title *Nights in Rodanthe*signifies the nights the protagonists Adrienne and Paul spend in the Inn. Throughout the story, the major time portrayed is night and its shining beauty. It emphasizes the importance of those nights and made the readers in a curiosity that what had happened in those nights and what the place is mentioned specially.

In *A Walk to Remember*, a novel set in North Carolina is a place which maintained a cool temperature i.e. the season is autumn, the fall. Even though the cool atmosphere creates a soothing effect, the fall can be the symbol of death. It is apt for the character for the plot of the story. Also, this climatic condition can be considered as the symbol of the life of Jamie Sullivan, and can also be read like that, this climate can be led us to the climax. Till the end, the same cool climate continues. So, the reader can expect a cool climax. It is a perfect one because, at the climax, the two become one by marriage. The night walk, cool breeze, street lights, ambience of the house of both of them etc. has a role in giving an additional

effect to the play. The significance of the season can be read in two ways according to the perspective of the reader. Sometimes the entire season autumn can be the symbol of the end of Jamie's life or it can also be seen as the end of her struggling life and beginning of the new phase of her life by overcoming her disease like the autumn or fall gave way to spring. The author gives it to readers to have a definite answer from that. He used the season as a weapon for this.

Keeping aside the factor climate, there are some other elements in the story, which the author used to depict certain meanings. Like for example Jamie's dressing, the play *The Christmas Angel*, the Bible she always carries, tombstones, Jamie's wish to get married etc. Jamie's dressing style and her physical appearance create an extraordinary feeling, entirely different from other teenagers. As the narrator describes:

> she was always looking for things like "inner beauty," … she always wore her hair in a tight bun, almost like a spinster, without a stitch of makeup on her face. Coupled with her usual brown cardigan and plaid skirt, she always looked as though she were on her way to interview for a job at the library (16-7).

These things make clear her character and the influence of religion in her. The Bible she always carries resembles her mother's presence in her life, her real strength. She has taken that as her guideline in her life.

In *Nights in Rodanthe* also, the author uses climate as a symbol for many occasions in the novel. When autumn spreads all over in *A Walk to Remember*, here author creates the mood of

winter. Actually,"Rodanthe wasn't a popular destination in winter" (64). The author tries to define different meanings by evoking the effects of winter. Like the very speciality of the winter season, the atmosphere is dead, frozen etc. Flora and fauna are very inactive in this state. There's nothing more to do for a human. This very state portrayed in the story throughout creates an awkward feeling. The very climate can be seen as the symbol of the relationship between the protagonists. Even though they are in the peak of their love, as the snow makes every creature frozen, inactive, the events in their life make their love a tragic one. It can also be read as the symbol of their separation. Paul's journey to Ecuador and hid death made apt for the climatic condition. The author presented this climate as a warning to the readers about the series of tragedies that happen in the end. This makes clear, the creative and imaginative power of the poem by depicting the climatic condition as a symbol of events happen in one's life.

Another variety Sparks put forward is the experiment climax of his works. In *A Walk to Remember* we can sense a happy ending, i.e. their union. The last sentence of the novel leaves the readers in an ambiguous situation that whether Jamie alive or not. That sentence is: "I still haven't told you: I now believe, by the way, that miracles can happen" (170). We can detect a satisfied, relief in the tone of the narrator. This makes a blend of confusion and happiness in the reader. Maybe she surrenders to death or may recover from sickness and led a happy life with Landon. The word 'miracle' here gives hope. Sometimes 'miracle' here referred by the author may be a substitute for love.

In *Nights in Rodanthe*, the author twist from the way he presents the climax of the formal one. Instead of that, he presents a clear-cut end to the story: the cold tragic ending. The last sentence of this novel tells us how one can live in someone's memory, even though there is no meaning to their life. At last, the narrator ends with saying that: "staring into the sky, she breathed deeply, listening to the distant and imagined echo of waves as they broke along the shore on a stormy night in Rodanthe" (231). This description deals with the full essence of the novel.

In these novels,one can find the elements of frame narration. The flashback in this story can be considered as a full story, while the story before telling the flashback became the frame of the original story. In *A Walk to Remember* the narrator tells his flashback as a method of recollecting them from his present position because to whom he is telling this story is not presented in the novel. Here his present condition became the frame and the flashback became the story inside it. But in *Nights in Rodanthe,* the love story of Paul and Adrienne serves as the story in the frame narrative, which is the story of Adrienne and Amanda. So that we can say that the author tried to portray the story in a frame narration which ends up in the starting point. Nicholas Sparks, as an author, plays an expertise nature through his work and it works really well too.

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Tactics in Ordinary Spaces: Resistance as Practice of Everyday Life as Portrayed in Chetan Bhagat's Fictional Oeuvre.

Kavitha Gopalakrishnan

Popular fiction is a distinctive literary field which mirrors the now time and Bhagat seems to encapsulate everything that gives that field definition. Nevertheless, his works are not favoured by the academia—as they have written them off for their lack of depth, one-dimensional storytelling, flat characterization, ungrammatical language etc., just to speak of a few. The academia brushes it aside stating it as formulaic, cheap reads but these features touches only one dimension of it. What is not given due attention while brushing aside these commodity literaturesis that they bring out "the philosophy of the age" (Gramsci qtd. in Kamble 161).Popular fiction, more often than not, is known more for what it allegedly is, rather than for itself.

Apart from presenting a couple centred universe divorced from all familial, religious and work concerns, most Bhagat's novels resonate strongly with a section of reading public—the young 'aspirational' Indians mirroring their anxieties, joys and sorrows. It integrates and develops the myth of romantic attachment—as sexual and emotional fulfilment—to handle and cope with the destabilizing conflicts that they (these youngsters with dreams of upward mobility) deal in their lives and also to stage contemporary socio-political

problems that are of immediate relevance to them. In these conflicts, Bhagat's popular dramady novels dramatize heterogeneous narratives about capitalism, governance, education, state-sponsored aggression, corruption, patriarchal norms, new-age women and so on. These heterogeneous narratives that lie within the text of the novel have their own specific and contradictory ideological meaning. Unlike light romances, where the complexities of reality are reduced to overflowing emotion sans social accountability or underpinnings, Bhagat's novels deal with everyday issues that an average Indian jostle with. Hence, the broad label 'popular fiction'—as commodities that are being manufactured in order to both contribute to, and reflect the reader's competing ideologies on personal, domestic and national levels—seems to describe Bhagat's novels in a comprehensive manner.

This article responds to the need to bring in a different perspective to bear on popular genres so as to illuminate the way we understand them. As a text, the popular fiction has a number of textual cues and patterns, which help in the potential interpretation of the text in the reading process. However, such cues and patterns are brushed aside as we approach the text with a preconceived notion that they are devices for stock responses. It is a fact that unless we wear critical lenses regularly, we may not be able to realize the play of power that we encounter on a daily basis.This has prompted the selection of Chetan Bhagat's bestseller*Three Mistakes of my Life* as a specimen of 'popular' fiction despite his/ its lack of appeal in the academia.

Chetan Bhagat is a writer who has seven bestsellers to his credit but is constantly slighted by the academia and critics primarily

because of a thinking rooted in the dichotomy between elite forms of literature that is considered complex and anti-representational and forms of popular literature which are considered to be simple, lineal and representational. The labels of 'elite' and 'popular' are so concrete that by default 'popular' fiction is seen as insignificant, uninspired expressions put forth in shoddy language. Looking through such supercilious convictions by taking an unprejudiced look would show that the concerns of Bhagat's novels are related to a 'new' India in the wake of the post-liberalization period.

Explorations of young people's experiences in changing times would help to "understand the complex relationship between personal agency and structural constraints" (Nayak and Kehily 14) in the whirlwind of changes in this period. Post-liberalization, as elaborated earlier, infused in youngsters an enterprising spirit but also brought with it chaos, confusions, dilemmas. The novel beautifully weaves the "liminality of young people's everyday politics" (Wood 337) and their undecidability to clearly place loyalties with the binaries of good/bad, right/wrong, establishment/anti-establishment, youngsters' worldview/adult politics, spiritual/material. The liminal statuses of young people (as they are in the threshold—neither a child nor completely an adult) provide them with "unique perspectives on social issues and enable them to respond to ways that were different to adult politics" (Wood 337) and thus provide fresh insights and political possibility.

Though most youngsters are charged with energy to make it big and motivated with dreams of a better life, they opt various tactics to achieve what they want. This is where Michel de Certeau's concepts of strategies and tactics comes to aid to analyse how

Bhagat's bestsellers makes use of the popular form to portray the lived experience of ordinary people of different, class, cultures, age groups and familial positions and also to obliquely address competing articulations of morality, gender, class, nation, religion, and contested identities.De Certeau emphatically says that ordinary people are not merely passive and submissive consumers but active ones who can manipulate the environments around them through everyday actions. We see how the young protagonists of such popular fiction show resistance against power and its apparatuses in daily life practices. Seemingly simple activities like eating, speaking, shopping, clubbing and the like are analysed as they are considered to conceive hidden forms of tactics against power mechanisms surrounding their lives. Young people's everyday politics are interesting because though their lives are "embedded within spatial and relational processes of socialisation with adults within their schools and communities, yet (they) also showed both agency and resourcefulness within these spaces" (Wood 337). They employ certain tactics to get what they want rather than upsetting the power centers blatently.

De Certeau differentiates between "strategies" and "tactics" to explain this power struggle. A strategy is the overarching framework employed by the ruling institutions and their objectives (e.g. to discipline or gain profit), whereas tactics are the individual everyday actions. Unlike strategies, tactics do not seek profits and are not results of planning, but depend of the situations and opportunities. They are the limited freedoms allowed by the framework of strategies. For this reason, de Certeau sees everyday practices as a form of political resistance: The tactics of consumption are the one of the ways in which the weak make use of the

strong.Everyday practices of consumption (including activities like walking or reading) are tactical in that they continuously re-signify and disrupt the schematic ordering of reality produced through the strategic practices of the powerful. The possibility of contestation of thesocial order, which is created through multiple strategies, is always implicit in the tacticalpractices of everyday life. For instance, In *Three Mistakes of My Life*, when Govind asks Vidya why she wants to be a doctor,she says that she was not sure what she wants to pursue but just wants to go out of Ahmedabad:

'I want to go to a college in Mumbai'. I want to get out of Ahmedabad. But mom and dad won't let me. Unless, of course, it is for a prestigious course like medicine or engineering. . . . Medicine is the other choice and my exit pass. . .. (46-47).

In an another occasion, Vidya is so excited to lose her virginity on her birthday with her tutor and her brother's best friend Govind. She sets the bed on the terrace underneath the water tank and seduces him engage in an amorous play with her. She knows well that her parents have a bad cannot climb up and her brother Ish is immersed in the television watching cricket match. Vidya is elated after consummation and she thanks god for making her adult and feels happy after losing her virginity. She says, "Wow, I am an adult and am no longer a virgin, so cool. Thank God" (201). It is to be seen as yet another tactic in a society that she feels is too limiting.

The three friends devise tactics to ensure that the school authorities accept their proposal for incorporating games into academics. The way in which they manage to get the shop in the temple, how they manage to train Ali are all examples of the tactical devises they use.

Bhagatian novels are typical examples of how popular texts mine out latent structures and representations in societies and weave them within a breezy narrative in an unsuspicious manner. Hence, the seemingly everyday places like home, dabha, cricket stadium, temple and the like ought to be teased out from the Bhagatian novels so as to show that places are filled with multiple meanings that render them open, dynamic and contested and to provide insight into the conceptualizations of space as socially and relationally produced. Everyday activities of people make space into place that is socially constructed through our relations. It would be naive to assume that while fictionalising these everyday lives the author chooses certain places without any purpose. Places are filled with plural meanings and to understand these one has to understand the social, cultural, spatial and sometimes even historical associations between people and places and the contests amongst them.

Bhagat's novels mostly set in post-liberal India where the action takes place in growing towns or cities that are transforming under the influence of economic liberalization policies. Hence it would be useful to understand the role these urban neighbourhoods and fast-growing small towns plays in the construction of social relations and shaping individual and group identities against the background of changed global-local connections in post liberal India. As his novels particularly narrate stories of upwardly mobile youngsters who benefited greatly from the changes that came in tandem with economic liberalisation, it would also be interesting to know how they mobilise space in the process of creating new identity for themselves. The big cities do not carry the weight of cultural tradition but

the small cities have it in galore. Most of these small cities are on their way to progress, for instance, it is interesting to note that malls are a key structure that every growing city wants to have. In the novel, Govind aspires to set up his shop in the Navarangapura mall—a space which is symbolic of his dreams of upward mobility. This will be evident when Gopal who says to Vidya, —". . . my dream-to get out of the old city and have a new shop in the air-conditioned mall" (90) speaks of his city thus:

> Ahmedabad is my city. It is strange, but if you have had happy times in a city for a long time, you consider it the best city . . . I know it is not one of those hip cities like Delhi, Bombay or Bangalore. I know people in these cities think of Ahmedabad as a small town, though that is really not the case. Ahmedabad is the sixth largest city in India, I could tell you that Ahmedabad has better multiplexes than Delhi or nicer roads than Bombay or better restaurants than Bangalore—but you will not believe. . . A funny thing about small towns is that people say it is real India. I guess they do acknowledge that at one level the India of big cities is fake. Yes, I am from the old city of Amdavad and proud of it. We don't have as many fashion shows and we still like our women to wear clothes. I don't see anything wrong with it. (7-8)

The last line of what Gopal just said leads us to the spatial representation of the contests in gender practices that is sensitively portrayed in Bhagatian novels. Global culture can produce new spaces giving rise to new femininities and masculinities. The place also becomes a social and cultural marker as it also allows for the

performance of their progressive selves. The pricing and explicitly cosmopolitan connections signal distance from surrounding places and their gender norms. The thoughts that go through Govind's mind while at Dairy Den, a high-end food outlet at Navarangpura with Vidya could reveal some of these contests:

> I took the least visisble seat in Dairy Den. Sure. No one from our gossip-loving pol came to this hip ten joint, but one could never be too careful. If a supplier saw me at Dairy Den, I would be like any other trendy young boy in Ahmedabad. I would never get a good price for cricket balls. (Three Mistakes of My Life 87)

Place as Doreen Massey has described is a type of spatial identity. An interesting space that is referred to in Bhagat's novel is the dhaba where the friends often meet. Dhaba's are on the way food outlets found almost on all highways across India. It is common find a Punjabi dhaba on Chennai highways. Hence dhaba in that sense is not localised. "Hotels, kitchens, dining rooms. . . are destinations for consuming food" (Nayar 165). We go to these spaces with a purpose of having food and thus they form the destination. But as Nayar rightly eating spaces like dhabas are not destinations but happen to be en-route to other places. And its significance is in the fact that it is between these places. Nayar says: The dhaba is a fascinating intersection of cultures without being affiliated to anyone. .

> . . The dhaba represents only movement, displacement, and cultural mixing . . . . There is no attempt to locate the dhaba in any another context (unlike, say a historical building or a museum or even a street in a new town). The dhaba is at

once a place and a non-place, and the site of intersection of food and mobility. (166)

This is evident in Bhagat's incorporation of the dhaba in novel. Qazi's dhaba was at the crossroads of Belrampur equidistant from the Hindu pols and the Muslim lanes and near the Muncipal Grounds where children of all communities came to play. This space hence offers an opportunity to function as performative site of negotiation of the contested and often unequal spaces between Hindus and Muslims in Ahmedabad. Ahmedabadis were mostly vegetarian but Qazi Dhaba offered non-vegetarian food too. From what Govind says, it becomes evident that they were very careful to not to hurt the sentiments of the Hindus there:

"Ishan and I came here for cheap food and extraordinary mutton. The owner assured us 'small mutton', implying goat and beef. I believed him, as he would not have survived in the neighbourhood if he served beef" (7).

De Certeau sees society as made up of the appropriation of products and systems between the producers of culture (or the ruling class) and the users (the ordinary people) and the interaction between the two. He sees this production as a means of exercising power and a mechanism of discipline. He maintains that users can manipulate these mechanisms and conform only so as to evade them. The game of cricket is one such power matrix used in the novel. The self-making fantasies that came along with new India transformation could be extended to explore sport spectacles which are often remade to gel within the image of neoliberal development logic clubbed with a moral responsibility and nationalist fervour. Sport is one of the specific areas where "the popular has dealt with

the problem of defining and expressing modernity within the framework of globalization" (10). Exploring cricket which is much more than a sport and one of the fundamental constituents of Indian popular culture,Biswarup Sen notes:

> Theories of Indian cricket, influenced by more general accounts of postcolonial society, tend to accommodate the history of cricket within nationalist narratives of self-expression and empowerment. . . . Arjun Appadurai, the eminent theorist of globalization, has contended that cricket is a "means of modernity" utilized by the nation state as it constituted itself after Independence. (10-11).

Cricket was not a national enterprise during the first half of twentieth century as teams were organised around either princely or communal lines. But gradually the status of cricket changed from a popular sport to national obsession. An interesting postulation is made by Arjun Appadurai, as if trying to comprehend the reason for this story of Indian cricket, is that it was a means of nation-building which fuses disparate groups into one cricketing whole. This is hinted in the story when after the win at Test series win at Eden Gardens, Govind says, "It was impossible to hear the TV commentary, as the crowds roared every time an Indian team member's name was announced" (129).The passion for the game and the bond that grows between Ish and Ali in *Three Mistakes of My Life* can be deciphered thus. Ishan and Ali feel connected to each other as they feel that they could help each other to empower themselves through cricket. Ishan leaves no stone unturned when it comes to Ali's future in Indian Cricket. He even takes him to Australia to get the approval of Lee whom he deems the best. The

act of getting the approval from the people who lead in world cricket is indicative of the fact that "cricket represents the anxiety that Indians feel about their place in the world order; it is not so much an assertion of modernity as a fear that we might not be modern enough" (11). This is evidenced in the change can be witnessed in the game in India too. Hosagrahar quotes what Somini Senguta, the sports columnist, accounts in "Hip, Fast and Furious" :

Not only was the game (of cricket) different, but the team was unlike those past. Its members played fast and furious. They danced victoriously on the cricket pitch. At news conferences, they spoke Hinglish, a mongrel of Hindi and English that has become the lingua franca of the young small-town Indian. . . (138).

These young cricketers who have changed the way the gentleman's game is played are examples of enterprising subjects on field. Hosagrahar says that these players "play the game not by other people's rules but unapologetically make up their own" (139). In *Three Mistakes of My Life*, at the fifth day of India- Australia series 2001, when everybody thought Ganguly could have asked his players play it safe and stay until no time left—a strategy when a follow-on threatens, he declares. Ganguly thinks" he has a chance to bowl the Australians out" (127) as he very well knew they too wouldn't play safe.

Thus, Bhagat weaves in the aspirations and anxieties of cricketing enterprise to portray that cricket is a means of modernity utilised by the nation to engage with national identity and global cultural matrix. He also shows how the enterprising culture and the call to fashion oneself and chase dreams by running an enterpriseof

one's choice is indicative of how the nation has found its feet in the globalized world.

By utilising de Certeau characterization of"tactics" as the purview of the non-powerful, this paper suggests that it would be very useful in the understanding of everyday as portrayed in popular fiction to better appreciate it critically. An understanding that tactics is not as a subset of strategy, but an adaptation to the environment, which has been created by the strategies of the powerful helps in understanding popular fiction and the everyday captured in it in better light. The inherent contradiction of strategy is that the control is never absolute and the situation upon which the strategy is devised is always changing, which constantly makes any strategy redundant.But tactics unsettle by incorporation and appropriation. This paper thus makes an attempt to elaborate tactics weaved into the popular fiction of Bhagat so as to lend a different lens in seeing popular fiction which are often criticised by the literary heavyweights as flippant and light reads.

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My Home

Krishnanunni B

A country so diverse, but
A country ever united
United by partition,
United by bloodshed,
In hopes of brighter tomorrows,
Tomorrows became yesterdays
And where are we now?
Our Sitas, Marys and Fatimas
Still can't read and write their names
Forget being worshipped;
Are they safe from being raped?
United we used to be
Now Ram and Nabi have parted their ways
The weaker ones falling prey
For gluttonous Vultures grown so fat
Their wings can't sustain them in the air...
Where the ill fortuned
Strangled by the serpent of denial
Below all law and justice,
The Mahatma on the notes looks at them
With a sardonic smile...
And where the voice of the voiceless
Is silenced by brute force
And where all protests have shrunken to
who'snext?

Dancing With a Waterfall

Jeswin Siby Joseph

I stayed up and above without opening my eyes
Lying in the clouds of secrecy in abundance
I witnessed the dreams of my ancestors giving a rise
And the liberated souls showing their independence

A hundred dreams shaped a figure out of nothing
A thousand miracles gave life to that figure of light
A million blessings made it look beautiful and stunning
A billion hearts stared at that everlasting sight

Along the seas of another deadly dragon
My boat began sinking into the dark waters
The winds whispered, her birth was a paragon
My soul cried out to save myself from slaughters

I poured the rays of the sun on a castle of crystals
As these crystals filled her eyes with walls of gold
Every time I rode between her eyes, I suffered a-systoles
Just like the fairy tales that couldn't uphold

I stood there in the middle of a thousand trains
That carried the memories that were never made
When I touched the blessings from the rains,
The cravings of my heart began to persuade

My shadows remained among the graves of death
A vision of the one I saw, kept me alive in the dark
When the moon turned red, t'was my last breath
As the wolves started to make their final mark

I couldn't defy the glare of my irresistible demons
But there was this light above the purgatory
A light that was iridescent to light up all the seasons
The illumination that made the dying stars extraordinary

If this heart of stone found solace
If the mind of a thief retrieved a cure
If the life of an adorer remained flawless
Why weren't the waters in the desert so pure?

The poisons of the prettiest grapes
Tried to demolish the spirit within me
I witnessed the earth and the moon changing shapes
And my ancestors marking their jubilee

Even though my intentions paved a way to paradise
The darkest raven followed me until I was washed ashore
The inscriptions of death were nothing but lies
The road to perdition was wider than before

I saw the world burning in reddening flames
But I fell and crawled along the glitters of her fragrance
Just the one I heard from a million names
Her pieces of beauty outshined the skies' radiance

My blood became blue like the sea after a storm
I landed on a place where dreams vaporized from the ashes
In a place where the heart of the phoenix began to transform,
I witnessed the doves of glory completing their splashes

Watching all these visions from above the stars
The calming of my soul reverted their course
And left the roses of passion with wounds and scars
Where the witches of hatred vanished in remorse

She was there, dressed in pure white bliss
I asked my Father in heaven to bring her down
But right before I adamantly started to reminisce,
Her presence created the beauty all around

The portals of the graves opened in tranquility
The Spear of Destiny began to show its visibility
The dungeons buried under, lost its stability
The elixirs filled up the cups and wells of mortality

Her glares rolled my sins into glittering pearls
Her voice lured the symphonies into my mind
Her smile of clemency was magnificently designed,
Her redolence drew the winds behind her curls

Her skin leaking with a touch of golden honey
Rushed into my veins of unexpected glory
My days turned out to be bright and sunny
She made out of me, an everlasting story

The winds blew a million candles that lighted a thousand miles
The tremors underground hammered my peace of mind
Chaos filled the spaces between several isles
All the lovely past of this world, I couldn't rewind

On snow-white horses, we rode, on a frozen lake
Where she casted my shadows right into the skies
I found the midnight bird frozen in time, wide awake
As the blue moon witnessed a perpetual rise

The towers of gold rusted with the sound of war
However, a ray of light scathed the rivers of death
That washed the colors of peace and serenity ashore,
Where the infant stole the murderer's breath

I swallowed the sands from an ancient hourglass
I spat out the sands, I spat out the past
The dreadful memories within, I had to surpass
To the path less travelled by, I wasn't the last

When she fell for the mind of a gentleman
She took me to places of perpetual length
When I became her one 'n' only regimen
I became her lifeline, her reliable strength

When I fell for the lady of my dreams
I showed the beauty of life and her uniqueness,
When she unruffled my mind's extremes,
She became my one fragile weakness

I witnessed another vision, worse than the holocaust
The rivers began flowing with nothing but blood
Where lives of a million souls had never a cost,
All these hallucinations emerged into a flood

The rains approached like a swarm of locusts carrying infections
The winds uttered the coming of thunder from the skies
The strikings that sensed the fallout of my intentions
I perceived the fallen souls, hearing their latest cries

I drowned into a river of thunderclouds
My soul was in need of something pure
I witnessed mutated miasma in a thousand crowds
Where the rainbows were seamlessly obscure

A cloud in the shape of a heart approached
When my spirit sensed love beyond its dimension
My lifeless hands towards the cloud, encroached
But granting me the love of my life wasn't its intention

The cloud impoverished its shape into a million fragments
When onto my chest the darkening mists did crawl
The dying anticipations of magical enchantments
Left me in tears like the ending of a waterfall

The picture of mother nature resembled her beauty
Her casted spell of love was of the highest deity
The waves across her eyes questioned my heterogeneity
And showed me a way to a place beyond infinity

Her eyes guided my sword to the edge of the world
Where the fairies were the strangest things to witness
Around the skies up and above her sparkling curls swirled
I found love inclining to my door of consciousness

When the seeds of life collided with the ashes of death
My journey of ascertaining true love ended in disharmony
But her surrounding grace held my final breath
And in ultimatum I found elation and harmony

I prayed a little more till the skies were blue again
A gift that enhanced the beauty of salvation,
Landed into my soul 'n' took away my pain,
As she became my eternal love 'n' revelation

I looked closely at the overwhelming eyes of hers
I saw myself reflecting a million other faces of mine
From each face emulated a story lasting a thousand years
Where the stories shed tales that no emotion could define

Her voices took shape and opened a door,
Showing me the other side of the wind
The ghosts of my past blew their elixirs ashore
When the clouds cried drops of wine, very thinned

The rattling of the stallions in the midst of the seas
Colored her hair with gold and textured with brocades
I wrote a million songs amongst a thousand fleas
As an enduring canvas emerged, lasting for decades

In the book of love that came crashing from above
I was destined to one in a million chances
To meet her on the very first page, a sinless dove
The gambles to witness her magnificent dances

A pile of stones one by one were laid on my tombstone
Yet death had never taken as my soul was still breathing
When the angels took me as my beloved moaned
My lady and I, we kept forever living.

For I couldn't help making memories with her
For I couldn't help holding my hands with her
For I couldn't help living my life with her
For I couldn't help falling in love with her

I felt her eyes on me when I was looking away
Oh how beautiful she was, my señora!
Her body filled the scrolls that never did decay
And towards the end she became my diary's aura

She blinded my spirit of wrath,
I lost the perception of the art of war
Her insights lighted my sympathetic path
The colognes worn by her washed ashore

A bird full of grace landed on the palm of my hand
But as soon as it took its flight, it turned into ashes
If all the prayers were answered, heaven would never expand
Only if I knew to make beauty out of my rashes

As I stepped into a mind of a devious villain
A pair of doves surrounded the abandoned moon
A drop of blood at the final inch of penicillin
Altered the rhythms of my pulse's tune

If animals were turned into humans and humans into animals,
Would the world be a better place to live in?
If hatred had the heart of the beloved and the beloved of the hatred
Would there be wine flowing beneath the skin?

My screams weren't of any use inside the coffin
The coffin that swallowed the memories of my future
I swam through the waves of death like a lunatic dolphin
In the midst of my body's demise, I went out to find a suture

Trapped inside a broken piece of an abandoned mirror,
Through the reflections, her shadows slipped away
I heard several manifestations telling tales of horror
The dungeons of fire broke down into shards of clay

I held the hand of a spectre and danced in the rain
Until I realized the rains were from a dead volcano
I was lost in the trenches of the lost seas again
Where venerated spirits rose from the deep inferno

The whispers of mine, where had they been?
Hadn't I had to cleanse myself to fall for her and stay?

Why couldn't I play her sounds with a violin?
Why couldn't I take her to the clouds and just fade away?

Why'd wise men say that it's for a fool to fall?
Was it because of its beauty that they couldn't recall?
For something like love, doesn't even have a wall
Love has the power to sacrifice and finally give it all

I wanted to reach my home where angels'd cry in felicity
A home where life's never under any captivity
My beloved maid, would you please grant me domesticity?
And show me the path to my forgotten nativity?

I heard death bragging about my sinless spirit
My queen, she shaped the world from her throne in Rome
The journey to paradise, so narrow to inherit,
She helped me win the race to get me home

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